October

The American Mercury

How the WPA Buys Votes . . . . *Gordon Carroll*
The Myth of the Two-Gun Man . . *Charles B. Roth*
Liberalism Commits Suicide . . . *Lawrence Dennis*
Missouri Uplift: A Case History . . *Ralph Coghlan*
Russia's Goldbrick Constitution . *W. H. Chamberlin*
How I Became a Fascist . . . . . *Anonymous*
Notes on an Economic Royalist . *J. W. Thomason, Jr.*
The Disarmament Hoax . . . . . *Fletcher Pratt*
Fallacies About Your Health . . *August A. Thomen*
The Road to Hell. *A Story* . . . . . *John Fante*
Why All Politicians Are Crooks . . . *An Editorial*
The Packing of Hugo Black . . . . *Albert Jay Nock*
OPEN FORUM AMERICANA NEW BOOKS

"THE WORKERS" *vs.* THE WORKERS
By Channing Pollock

25 cents a copy

PRODUCED 2008 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ow MILLIONS of People Are Wea::

THERE were only seven automobiles in John Brown's home town 30 years ago, when John was born. A few rich men owned them, and the cars—such as they were—cost well over $2000. Today, for much less than $1000, John has a car that is far better than anyone owned even a decade ago. In fact, for what a leading car cost in 1907, John can now have, besides a better car, other things—automatic house heating, a radio, golf clubs. Mrs. Brown can have an electric refrigerator, a fur coat, and a lot of new dresses.

Today in America three out of four families have cars better than the best a few years ago. Their homes are more cheerful with improved electric light, which also costs less. Their house furnishings are more attractive and comfortable, yet less expensive.

They have many servants at little cos for electricity does the tedious tasl about the house.

This *real* wealth has come to millio of people because industry has learned i build products that are worth more b cost less. Engineers and scientists ha found ways to give the public more f its money—more goods for more peop at less cost.

In this progress G-E research and eng neering have ever been in the forefron And still, in the Research Laborator in Schenectady, General Electric sc entists continue the search for ne knowledge—from which come saving new industries, increased employmen benefits which bring to millions John Browns real wealth unknown generation ago.

G-E research has saved the public from ten to one hundred dollars for every dollar it has earned for General Electric

GENERAL ELECTRIC

LISTEN TO THE HOUR OF CHARM, MONDAY EVENINGS, N. B. C. RED NETWORK

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOW MANY SHAVES IN AN Electric Dry Shaver?

$15
AC and DC

ONLY SCHICK HAS THE EXPERIENCE TO ANSWER TRUTHFULLY THIS QUESTION

SCHICK SHAVERS have been used for more than five years. More than a million-and-a-half men shave with the Schick daily. Out of their day-by-day experiences come the proofs of the lasting qualities of this remarkable shaver.

No other shaver can possibly have this proof—none has been in use long enough to demonstrate that it can shave, day after day for years, with no appreciable wear of the cutting surfaces.

From thousands of unsolicited, unpaid-for letters we have chosen some extracts which speak for themselves.

LAWRENCE ELLIS—*I and my brother-in-law have used it every day. This totals about 2520 shaves—cost me slightly above one-half cent for each shave.*

W. A. N.—*My shaver has been used approximately 2733 times at an average cost of 6/10 of a cent.*

ED ERIKSEN—*I have now had over 1800 consecutive shaves.*

CHARLES DIMMLING—*Three of us used the Schick regularly—a grand total of 4600 shaves. This has been done without a single repair.*

WILLIAM H. BIRD—*At Christmas, 1932, I was presented with a Schick. I have a son who also uses it. I figure this razor has done 3000 perfect shaves.*

KENNETH C. MILLER—*This morning I used mine for the 1319th time.*

E. D. MICHALKE—*On November 8, 1932, I bought one of your shavers. My brother also used it for two years, which means an average of 6 years' use . . . It will probably last indefinitely.*

D. A. TURNER—*Shaved every day for three years (1095 times) without spending a penny for repairs or replacements.*

The Schick was designed, not only to be the fastest, closest-shaving instrument in the world, but to last as long as human brains and skill could make it.

The Schick *does pay for itself* over and over again as many user witnesses testify.

Go to an authorized dealer today. Let him show you the Schick, tell you how you can shave the toughest beard or the tenderest skin with NO BLADES, NO LATHER and no possibility of cutting or hurting yourself.

SCHICK DRY SHAVER, INC., STAMFORD, CONN. Western Distributor: Edises, Inc., San Francisco. In Canada: Henry Birks & Sons, Ltd., and other leading stores.

SCHICK SHAVER

PRODUCED 2008 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

VOLUME XLII

NUMBER 166

October

Paul Palmer, *Editor*

1937

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"The Workers" *vs.* The Workers ..... Channing Pollock 129
Missouri Uplift: A Case History ..... Ralph Coghlan 139
How I Became a Fascist ..... Anonymous 147
The Myth of the Two-Gun Man ..... Charles B. Roth 151
Liberalism Commits Suicide ..... Lawrence Dennis 157
Deeper Than Atlanta. *Verse* ..... Jackson Mathews 168
The Disarmament Hoax ..... Fletcher Pratt 173
Russia's Goldbrick Constitution ..... William Henry Chamberlin 181
Fallacies About Your Health ..... August A. Thomen 187
How the WPA Buys Votes ..... Gordon Carroll 194
The Road to Hell. *A Story* ..... John Fante 214
Editorial 220
Americana 226
The Packing of Hugo Black ..... Albert Jay Nock 229
Notes on an Economic Royalist ..... John W. Thomason, Jr. 234
The Open Forum 239
The Check List iv
The Contributors xiii
Recorded Music ..... Irving Kolodin xiv

Verse by Eileen Hall, Sister M. Madeleva, John Russell McCarthy

Gordon Carroll, *Managing Editor*

Albert Jay Nock, *Contributing Editor* John W. Thomason, Jr., *Literary Editor*

Lawrence E. Spivak, *General Manager*

Published by The American Mercury, Inc., monthly on the 25th of the month preceding the date, at 25 cents a copy. Annual subscription, $3.00 in U. S. and Possessions, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Spain and Colonies, and the Republics of Central and South America. Foreign subscriptions, $4.00. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial office, Ridgefield, Conn. General offices, 570 Lexington avenue, New York City. Printed in the United States. Copyright, 1937, by The American Mercury, Inc. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H. under the Act of March 3, 1879. Five weeks' advance notice required for change of subscribers' addresses. Indexed in The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. No reproduction of content allowed without written permission. The American Mercury, Inc., accepts no responsibility for submitted manuscripts. *Address all editorial correspondence and manuscripts to Ridgefield, Connecticut.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A FREE COPY... *For Your Library*

THE NILE

by Emil Ludwig

RETAIL PRICE FIVE DOLLARS

"WHAT A RIVER! WHAT A LIFE-STORY!"

CRITICS are almost unanimously agreed that this book, published early this year, is Ludwig's greatest. There arise before our eyes an endless train of historical figures, the warring tribes, the strange races, that have desperately fought and struggled for existence along its shores. Here is the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; of Alexander the Great; of the Ptolemies; of Caesar and Cleopatra; of Bonaparte—and countless other heroes, adventurers and madmen who make up the splendid pageant which has followed the course of the Nile. Through it all the Nile, mighty artery of life to land and people, flows majestically through the ages while humanity grubs and claws on its banks.

WHY WE OFFER TO GIVE YOU A FREE COPY

THERE is no reader of *American Mercury* who would not find it to his advantage to subscribe to the Book-of-the-Month Club; and we make this offer to demonstrate that such is the case.

What we here propose is this: mail the coupon, *and a copy of this fine library volume will be put aside in your name,* and held until we hear whether or not you care to join. In the meantime, a booklet will be sent to you outlining how the Club operates.

Study this booklet at your leisure; you may be surprised, for instance, to learn that belonging to the Club does not mean you have to pay any fixed sum each year; nor that you are obliged to take one book every month, twelve a year (you may take as few as four); nor are you ever obliged to take the specific book-of-the-month selected by the judges. You have complete freedom of choice. You also participate in the Club's "book-dividends," of which over $1,450,000 worth were distributed among members last year.

If, after reading the booklet you decide to join the Club, the free copy of THE NILE reserved for you will at once be shipped to you.

Over 150,000 families—composed of discerning but busy readers like yourself—now get most of their books through the Book-of-the-Month Club. When you read the booklet you will discover why.

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB A1310
385 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

PLEASE send me without cost, a booklet outlining how the Book-of-the-Month Club operates. This request involves me in no obligation to subscribe to your service.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

Books shipped to Canadian members through Book-of-the-Month Club (Canada) Ltd.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CHECK LIST

★★★★★ indicate a book of exceptional and lasting merit. ★★★★ a distinguished and valuable work. ★★★ a readable and engaging volume. ★★ a fair performance. ★ an unimportant book, but possessing some characteristic of value. The absence of stars may be taken to mean the absence of merit.

BIOGRAPHY

★★★ THE ROMANTIC DECATUR, by Charles Lee Lewis. $3.00. *University of Pennsylvania.* Decatur's glamorous story, with its romantic overtones and its tragic ending, has been told before; but this author, through his connection with the Naval Academy and his own familiarity with the background and the problems of the Navy, is able to assess the Commodore's great professional services at their true value. The whole thing is excellently presented.

★★★ MEN OF MATHEMATICS, by E. T. Bell. $5.00. *Simon & Schuster.* Biography in the field of the exact sciences, with explanations for the layman of such mysteries as relativity, the fourth dimension, and the laws of chance.

★ WILL MARINER, by Boyle Townshend Somerville. $3.50. *Houghton Mifflin.* The late author and admiral was assassinated by Irishmen in Ireland because he recruited youngsters for the British Navy. But this book, published posthumously, carries on the work — in a certain sense. The narrative of Mariner's adventures in the South Seas will fetch potential midshipmen by the score.

HISTORY

★★★★ THE CRUSADES, by Hilaire Belloc. $3.00. *Bruce.* A military history of the Crusades tied into their sociological effects, the whole set down in Mr. Belloc's usual skillful manner to persuade us once again that the future of civilization depends upon the health of Christianity (Roman). This is probably the most adult book so far written on the Crusades, and is fascinating.

★★★ THE SIEGE OF ALCAZAR, by Geoffrey McNeill-Moss. $3.50. *Knopf.* An impressive account, without "Save-Spanish-Democracy" flavor, of the seventy days during which a thousand Nationalists wrote one of the few courageous chapters in the current Spanish conflict. Major Moss is not interested in the motivations of the noble Fascists or the noble Communists; he presents facts, based upon official reports. No better book of its kind has come out of the war.

★★★ A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE JEWS, by Salo Wittmayer Baron. Three Volumes. $11.50. *Columbia University Press.* Panoramic narrative, running to some 1200 pages, of the people who have suffered tribulation and crisis since the beginning of time. Professor Baron has performed a prodigious feat: a clear and scholarly interpretation of the forces operating in the background of human evolution.

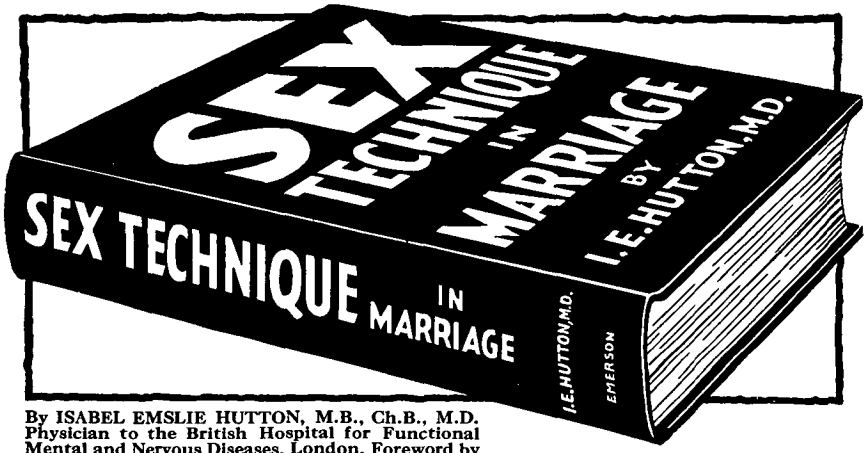
FICTION

★★★ SONG ON YOUR BUGLES, by Eric Knight. $2.50. *Harpers.* Something quite rare — a genuine proletarian novel, presenting the ideologies of Capitalism and Labor with equanimity. Herrie Champion, a young mill-worker who becomes an artist, is the central character, and the struggle between his sympathy with the workers and his love for art creates a plausible study in human conflict.

★★★ AMERICAN DREAM, by Michael Foster. $3.00. *Morrow.* The story of three generations of an emigrant family in their groping search toward realization of American ideals, written with sensitivity and passion.

(Continued on page vi)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



By ISABEL EMSLIE HUTTON, M.B., Ch.B., M.D. Physician to the British Hospital for Functional Mental and Nervous Diseases, London. Foreword by IRA S. WILE, M.D., Former Commissioner of Education New York City.

Illustrated with Explanatory Diagrams

SUBJECTS INCLUDED

PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION — Necessary Sex Knowledge — Sex Freedom Before Marriage for the Man; For the Woman — Sex Instinct in Men and Women Contrasted — Implications of Courtship — Hereditary Factors — The Age Factor — Indications of Sexual Incompatibility — The Neurotic Temperament in Marriage.

FIRST SEX ACT — Analysis of Sexual Intercourse — Preliminary Love-Play — Overcoming Mental Obstacles — Pain — Early Intercourse — The Fatigue Factor — The Husband's Part — The Wife's Part — Methods of Sexual Stimulation — The Active vs. the Passive Wife — Nervous Shock of First Intercourse — Temporary Impotence — Simultaneous Climax; How Produced.

THE SEX ORGANS — Knowledge of Male and Female Organs Essential to Both Husband and Wife — "Fitting" — Anatomy of Sex Organs — Hygiene of Sex Organs — How Fertilization Takes Place — Woman's Hygiene.

SEX LIFE IN MARRIAGE — The Arts of Love — Timing — Impotence During Marriage — Sexual Cooperation — Influence of Age, Sexual Instinct and Health — Sexual Adjustment — Sex Errors — Sexual Rhythm — Frequency of Intercourse; Positions in Intercourse — When Variations are Indicated — Sexual Starvation — The Unsatisfied Wife — Prelude to Sex; Love Play — Sex Life During Pregnancy; after Childbirth.

MENSTRUATION AND THE CHANGE OF LIFE — The Hygiene of Menstruation — Sexual Activity during and after the Change of Life — The Menstrual Cycle and Conception — Normal and Abnormal Symptoms.

CURABLE CHILDLESSNESS — Simple Causes and Their Treatment — Conditions where Medical Treatment is Required — Conditions where Surgical Treatment is Indicated.

BIRTH CONTROL

THE SEX TECHNIQUE IN MARRIAGE is a book for husbands and wives to read together, if they wish to remain together!

IT comes as a startling fact to many couples who THINK they are well-informed, that they ARE in REALITY, AMAZINGLY IGNORANT OF THE SEX TECHNIQUE IN MARRIAGE. "When no trouble is taken to learn how to make sexual intercourse harmonious and happy, a variety of complications arise. Very often wives remain sexually unawakened, and therefore inclined to dislike sexual intercourse. When that happens, husbands do not experience what they long for, and are apt to be sexually starved. Neither husbands nor wives on these terms attain to harmony, and the result is nervous ill-health. . . . The cause of all this is not want of love. It is want of *knowledge.*" — A. H. Gray, M.A., D.D.

"FROM a very large clinical experience I have come to the conclusion that probably not one in five men knows how to perform the sexual act correctly." Many men feel bitter, in a resigned sort of way, about their "frigid wives." As a matter of fact this problem, which too often is one of "the bungling husband," frequently vanishes completely when both husband and wife know exactly what to do for each other. In THE SEX TECHNIQUE IN MARRIAGE, Dr. Hutton describes the sexual act in such detail that no one need any longer remain in ignorance of exactly how it should be performed. In the foreword to this work Dr. Ira S. Wile declares: "A knowledge of the science of mating offers greater assurance of successful marriage."

WHILE completely frank, Dr. Hutton handles the subject with excellent taste, and, as the American Medical Association says, "with good judgment as to what constitutes general medical opinion."

SEND NO MONEY

READ FIRST- THEN DECIDE!

Mail coupon to your bookseller or to

EMERSON BOOKS, INC., Dept. 195-A
251 West 19th St., New York

Send me "Sex Technique in Marriage" in plain wrapper marked "Personal." I will pay $2.00 and few cents postage on delivery. I MUST BE SATISFIED or I will return book within 5 days and you will refund purchase price. (I am over 21 years old.)

Name .....

Address .....

☐ CHECK HERE if you wish to enclose only $2.00 with coupon, thus saving delivery charges. **(Same money-back guarantee)**

ILLUSTRATED

PRODUCED 2008 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

4

Full Length Novels

for $1.00

Mercury Books

THE price of MERCURY BOOKS —25c each — is made possible only because the sale of the BOOKS in their original editions earned the initial investment of the original publishers — and because authors and publishers accept a low royalty on our special editions. The books are designed by one of the foremost book designers, are well printed, and are handsomely bound in special English finish cover paper.

MERCURY BOOKS are on sale on all good newsstands or direct from the publishers.

★ COMPANY K — *"An extraordinarily moving and an important book — one that deserves a place with the best of its kind." . . . Saturday Review of Literature.*

★ THIRTEEN STEPS — *a powerful, startling novel paced by breathless action and a strange love story.*

★ EVERYTHING IS THUNDER — *described by O. O. McIntyre as "the most absorbing book I've read in five years."*

★ THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE — *described by the famous F. P. A. as "the most engrossing book that I have any memory of."*

☐ Enclosed is my $1.00. Send all four books.

Enclosed find..... Please send
☐ Company K ☐ Thirteen Steps
☐ Everything Is Thunder
☐ The Postman Always Rings Twice

Name.....

Address.....

AM-10-37

AMERICAN MERCURY BOOKS
570 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.

THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from page iv)

★★★ LOW COMPANY, by Daniel Fuchs. $2.50. *Vanguard.* The title is no overstatement. Mr. Fuchs knows the Coney Island concessionaires and, what is more, can write vividly about them. Not pleasant, but well-done.

★★★ SAD-FACED BOY, by Arna Bontemps. $2.00. *Houghton Mifflin.* Three black brothers from Alabama sojourn in Harlem, form a band, plan to take Broadway by storm — until cotton picking time and ripe persimmons lure them back home. A pleasant and well-illustrated book for ten-year-olds.

★★★ THE SCANDALS OF CLOCHEMERLE, by Gabriel Chevallier. $2.50. *Simon & Schuster.* Rabelaisian tale of a French village, and what happened there during a great crisis in public morals. The translation is excellent.

★★★ TOGETHER AND APART, by Margaret Kennedy. $2.50. *Random House.* Another analysis of the Divorce Problem, rescued from banality by the author's flair for character delineation.

★★ LAND UNDER HEAVEN, by Pearl Ashby Tibbetts. $2.50. *Falmouth Book House.* Of pioneering days in Aroostook, Maine's potato-growing country, and of the history of one family from the bloodless Aroostook War to the time the railroads opened up markets, thereby bringing wealth to a fertile land.

★ NO HOUSE OF PEACE, by Elizabeth Connor. $2.50. *Appleton-Century.* The tragic story of a house and the woman who dominated it, against the background of petty snobbery and respectability common to Irish provincial areas.

ELEVENTH HOUR, by Robert Clive. $2.00. *Norton.* Against the background of pre-Hitler Germany, Peter and Caroline stage a dull love affair which ends with separation, and none too soon.

(Continued on back adv't section, p. x)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some Ideas on How to Retire

—*while you are still young enough to enjoy it*

By Hugh Fenwick

MANY people seem to be puzzled about this matter of assuring themselves of funds on which to retire. Some feel that they have to put aside a very large sum in order to get any retirement-income plan started. Others feel that these plans require monthly installments of such a size as to interfere with their present mode of living.

Still others believe that they will not receive a stipulated monthly income until they are "too old." Other misconceptions are that "you have to pass a medical examination," that "our situation is so different that no plan will apply," or that the chance of future disability may cause them to lose out, that "if you miss a monthly payment you lose your annuity rights" — or other mistaken opinions.

I have been seeing and talking with people about this subject for many years. They are deeply interested in it, and there seems to be no end to the questions in their minds. But the unfortunate thing is that many others face a dangerous situation in the future simply because no one has ever set them straight on exactly how they could easily provide for it during the present.

Due perhaps to their own procrastination, no one has helped them to analyze their particular present situation and future requirements or desires. And no single annuity plan should be adopted by any person unless *all* the facts about the various plans (of all companies) are explained *fully* — to determine *which* may most soundly and intelligently be integrated into one's individual program of life.

For example, if you have a son, you may want to make sure that when he is ready to go into business you will be able to provide him automatically with a fixed sum as a good start. Or you may want to get away from worrying about the investment of your own funds; particularly so in these times of indecision as to how to invest with safety, and yet receive a worthwhile income.

Or you may want to provide for taking up the holdings of a partner who wishes to retire at a certain age. Perhaps you may want to build an educational fund which will mature at the right time for your children, or a travel fund, a mortgage fund, a pension to a devoted servant. Or, if you are doing exceedingly well now, perhaps you may want to "telescope" your plans so that you can retire sooner than you would otherwise be able to.

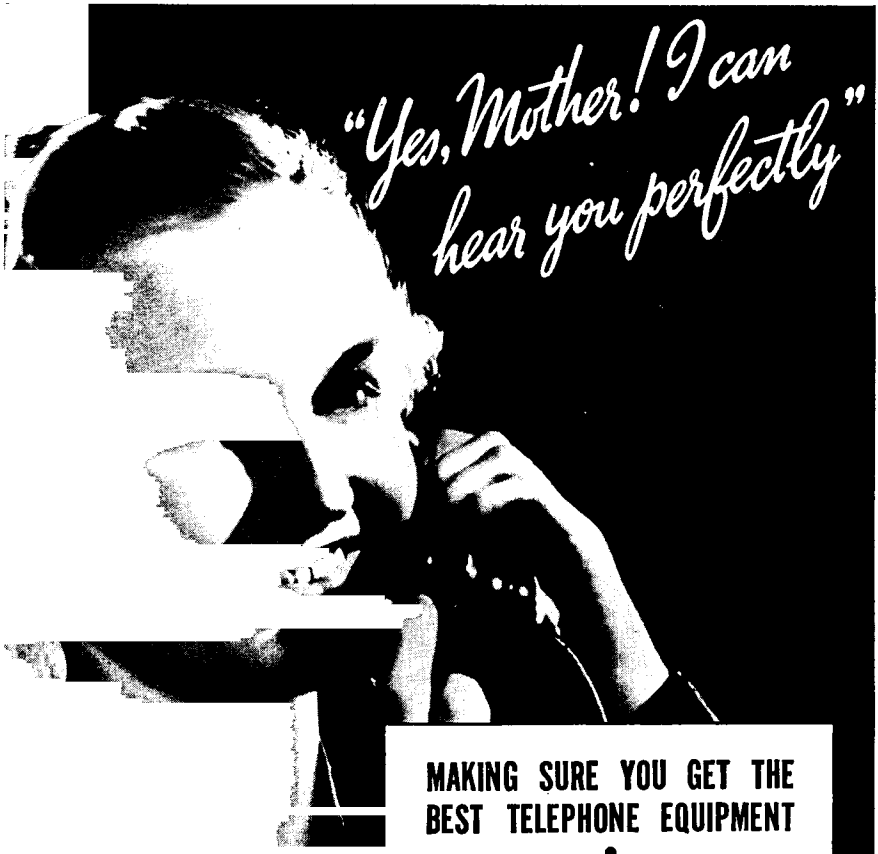
At any rate, the many various annuity and retirement plans may be adjusted to fit almost any personal desire for the future which you may have. They apply whether your income is large or small, whether you are in your thirties or your seventies, or regardless of the age at which you wish to retire. It is all a matter of being thoroughly familiar with the plans obtainable, and applying them, with expert help, to your own case.

That kind of expert guidance has been my work for a good many years. I don't just represent any one company or any one plan. I represent all of the companies which offer annuity plans accepted as sound and worthwhile. During the last six months I have written annuities representing over $1,000,000 in premiums.

Perhaps you yourself have hesitated to do anything about this matter because you felt that some angle of it didn't apply to your particular case. If this is true, you may be doing yourself and your family a grave injustice. And perhaps needlessly, because there doubtless is a sound annuity plan, entirely consistent with what you can afford, which will meet any particular future requirement that you have set up in your own mind, but have never provided for.

May I suggest that you write to me, telling me the questions that are in your mind, and giving me as many facts as you care to? I will study the information you give me and, without obligating you in any way, will conscientiously advise you as to which plan may best meet your needs. *Address:* HUGH FENWICK, Fenwick & Company, 99 John Street, New York, N.Y.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



MAKING SURE YOU GET THE BEST TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT

Good in design, high in quality, low in cost and ready when needed — these are the requirements for telephone apparatus in the Bell System.

For half a century Western Electric has met these requirements through centralized manufacturing and distribution. By serving the Bell Telephone Company in your city and in every section of the country, it has helped make this nation's telephone service what it is today.

TELEPHONE APPARATUS GIVES GOOD SERVICE. . . . BELL SYSTEM SERVICE IS BASED ON WESTERN ELECTRIC QUALITY

AMERICAN TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH CO. BELL SYSTEM AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOLUME XLII OCTOBER, 1937 NUMBER 166

The American
MERCURY

"THE WORKERS" *vs.* THE WORKERS

By Channing Pollock

A messenger from Mars who visited our little planet would be justified in carrying away the conviction that its only useful citizens are laying bricks or puddling steel. "The population," he would write in his travel book, "is unequally divided into two classes: the Workers — men and women of the greatest ability and character, who perform all the labor, are responsible for all accomplishment, and are invariably poor and ill-treated; and the idlers, who are rich, wasteful, unproductive, self-indulgent, steeped in vice, and devoted to the exploitation of the larger group. An effort, however, is now being made to remedy this situation."

Currently, that is the view in America. "The Worker" has become a sacred cow. He is the source of all virtue — and all votes; the world goes on solely because of him, and, therefore, he and he only should rule the world. Whether he actually works or not, he must be provided with electric ice-cream freezers, pastel-tinted bathrooms, and the motor cars he repeatedly refuses to make. He is the inspiration of much of our poetry and literature, most of our political policies, and practically all our slogans. Our hopes and fears begin and end with him; he is the center of our sentimentalities, the arbiter of our destinies, the keystone in the arch of civilization. We have taken his worth, his cause, and his clichés at their asserted value. Last week, a circle of the fattest men and women in New York City

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moved endlessly before the Empire State Building, carrying picketing placards that read "We are on strike against starvation wages" — and nobody laughed!

Developments of the past few months, however, have knocked some of the plaster off "The Worker" fetish. The average American is impervious to anything that doesn't affect his personal comfort, and this includes mental comfort; he doesn't like being forced to think; but when he does think, no matter how superficially, the process stirs atavistic faiths, and a latent sense of justice. The average American doesn't actively resent your pushing him downstairs, but then if you kick him in the head long enough, it makes him mad. The sit-down seizure of other people's property didn't disturb him much, because, after all, it *was* other people's property. But armed denial of the right to work hit closer home, and at last, even the placid average American began to question the sacrosanctity of "Labor" that, allied with Moscow and Washington, censored the mails, beat and kidnaped citizens, tore up railway tracks, and dynamited water mains.

As yet, however, this questioning is distinctly tolerant. The average American is still inclined to agree with that modern Galahad, Governor Murphy of Michigan, that "while it may be true that the laboring man sometimes makes mistakes", they are mere trifles "in the struggle for human justice". Boys will be boys, and what's a stick of dynamite among friends? Red Russia and Roosevelt have won practically worldwide credence for the postulation that "The Worker" is the exploited victim of the idlers he makes rich, of "piratical methods and practices", of Economic Royalists and Princes of Entrenched Greed. "A small group has concentrated into their own hands an almost complete control of other people's property, other people's money, other people's labor, and other people's lives." It would, perhaps, be seditious to inquire further into the identity of this group.

Of course, Dr. Roosevelt did not invent this theory — or any other. Long before Dr. Karl Marx arrived with *Das Kapital,* Ulysses S. Grant, who wasn't above a little rabble-rousing for his own benefit, declared: "Whatever there is of greatness in the United States, or indeed in any other country, is due to labor. The laborer is the author of all greatness and wealth." With the rise of Democracy, and the in-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

creased voting power of the masses, that phrase, or its approximation, has become an international stencil. The flaw in it is the implied — or at least accepted — definition of the word *labor*. To say that labor — *all* labor — "is the author of all greatness and wealth", is like saying that water runs down hill, or that heat rises. The truth is that pretty nearly everybody in the world is a worker, and that, when this ceases to be the truth, the world, as we know it, will cease to exist. If there are drones, they are more likely to be among the "laboring class" than anywhere else, for the simple reason that only the hired man can live with much less than his maximum effort. "The Workers" err in assuming that there is something uncommon in work, that it is the monopoly — or the burden, as you choose — of any one class, and that it is done exclusively with a hammer, a saw, a wheelbarrow, or a sewing-machine.

The now-general insistence that this kind of work, unfortunately performed by a distinct minority of our citizens, and almost exclusively by those incapable of other effort, creates "the real wealth" is sheer nonsense. Of himself, by himself, and for himself, this type of worker can't produce anything — including his own job. Before anybody can make anything, somebody must invent it. Ten or twenty or fifty other people must perfect the invention, devise machinery for its manufacture, and finance, organize, and direct the proceeding. Somebody must create a demand, and a sales force to supply it. The hardest and most important work in the world is done at desks and drafting boards; in offices, at home, and even on golf courses and tennis courts; before, throughout, and after union hours, by men no proletarian has ever thought of as "The Workers".

The wealth of the world is created by a cerebral organ weighing only a few ounces; and, if the five hundred best of these had been liquidated in every generation, there would be no wealth and no "Workers". This is true even of so-called natural wealth. Oil, for example, "is a product of nature that belongs to all of us". It wasn't much good to any of us, however, until nature also produced John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford. How many "Workers" would be producing wealth from electricity if there had been no Franklin, Edison, Westinghouse, or General Electric? Wealth comes of the genius and industry of a James Watt, an Eli Whitney, a Cyrus McCormick, an

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Orville Wright, or a Lee De Forrest, and, in a progressively decreasing degree, of the industry of the workers (without quotes) who develop, finance, organize, direct, market, and, by skilled and unskilled labor, mold, make, or assemble the product. All this constitutes an essential partnership, with a sliding scale of rewards; but when manual labor denies that there is any other kind, or that the other kind earns the larger share of the reward; when, in fact, either kind arrays itself in sustained opposition to the other kind, it isn't going to be very long before the only wealth left will be in the hands of demagogues, politicians, and agitators.

II

The weakness of America — perhaps of the world — is its passionate addiction to any good slogan. We went to war in 1898 because somebody bade us "Remember the *Maine*", though no one yet knows who destroyed the *Maine*. We went to war again to "Make the World Safe for Democracy", which seemed reasonably safe until we went to war. But no two loosely-used words ever had a larger responsibility for our troubles than Capital and Labor. We have come to say them as we say "ham and eggs", or, perhaps, more as we say "good and evil", but without anything like equal understanding. What is Capital? What is Labor? My guess is that the image in the mind of the average American who answers the first question will approximate the late Frederick Opper's cartoon of The Trusts, amid the luxuries to which we have been accustomed by Cecil de Mille. Labor, on the other hand, has its ideograph in racial recollection of a stalwart figure that once was used to advertise Plymouth Rock overalls. This figure now appears in ink, paint, bronze, or marble as the microcosmic typification of toil.

Neither one of these pictures is dependable. To begin with, most capitalists are, or certainly have been, workers. Capital does not create itself, and the number of capitalists who have acquired the wherewithal by inheritance or speculation is strictly limited. The *Century Dictionary* defines capital as "an accumulation of the products of past labor capable of being used in the support of present or future labor". That accumulation may be large or small; the hundreds of millions required by railways and steel mills, and that greatest and most predatory of all capitalists, the government, or the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modest savings of Entrenched Greed that, having earned and put by a few dollars, is in favor of keeping them.

Oddly enough, these sums constitute the bulk of American Capital. Big Business is too big to be financed by the few. The figures, available to anyone, have been published frequently. American Telephone and Telegraph represents 775,000 investors. Standard Oil of New Jersey is financed by 121,000 capitalists, one-sixth of whom work for, and earned their capital *by*, working for the company. Even The Trusts, therefore, are less accurately symbolized by Opper than by that forgotten artist of Plymouth Rock overalls. The dividing line runs not between Capital and Labor, *but between the kind of Labor that works and saves, and the kind that doesn't.* It is a line between the kind of workman who helped make America, and "The Workers" who are helping destroy it — a line, in fact, between that stalwart figure in blue overalls, and the far less captivating newspaper photographs of those who follow the red flag.

The opponents, then, even in Big Business, are not, and in recent years never have been, Capital and Labor, but workmen and "Workers". This includes the commanders of the so-called capitalistic forces. Comparatively few of them are anything but the best grade of hired men. The chief difference between them and other labor is that they are generally more intelligent and better trained, and that they don't quit when the whistle blows. They get higher salaries because they earn them, but otherwise their stake in the business they administer is proportionately small. Even when this is not true, as I pointed out in THE AMERICAN MERCURY last April, today's capitalist was yesterday's stake-driver or crane-operator. As I shall point out, his change of occupation may indicate many other things, but it almost never indicates that he has stopped work.

Little Business, still the greater part of our industry, you can investigate for yourself. Drop into any one of your neighborhood shops, and the man who treats you with the greatest consideration, the man most interested in his job, the man who works hardest, is the boss. Maybe that's how he got to be boss; maybe he merely realizes that this is the only way he can remain boss. He is our realest capitalist, because usually his money is the only money in the enterprise; but, also, he is real Labor. The fact that he employs one or one

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundred other workers no more alters his status than theirs is altered if they employ "hired girls". Dispassionately investigated, the distinction between Capital and Labor becomes, like the equator, "an imaginary line running round the earth". It is so vague a distinction that no one need be surprised at occasional confusions — as when a friend of mine, who had been fifty-one consecutive hours at his desk, received a delegation demanding a forty-hour week. "We represent," the spokesman said, "one hundred per cent of 'The Workers' in this factory."

Most of these conclusions being pretty obvious, the question that remains is: "What's all the shootin' for?" And the answer, as in most conflicts, is that a great many people make a lot of money out of shootin'. If by Labor we mean the ignorant, the shiftless, and the credulous, then Labor *is* being exploited, always has been, and probably always will be — but less by unscrupulous employers than by labor leaders and politicians. So long as solicitude for "The Workers" can provide these leaders with the luxuries of the so-called capitalistic class, and these politicians with power and glory, rabble-rousing will continue to be one of our major industries. Persuade the poor Pole or the illiterate Italian that he is downtrodden and underprivileged, get a sufficient number of him to keep the unpersuaded out of work, and there can be little difficulty in collecting dues and delivering the vote. Deliver the vote, and there will be even less difficulty in persuading politicians to persuade the unpersuaded that they are downtrodden and underprivileged. The vicious circle is clear and complete.

Red Russia and Roosevelt have done an enormous amount of persuading; indeed, it would be hard to prove that they have done very much else. At least, after four years during which most of his wishes have become law, the good Doctor still finds that "One third of our population . . . is ill-nourished, ill-clad, and ill-housed". If that were true, we should need no other evidence that the making of laws, the expenditure of billions, and the giving of *carte blanche* to the most violent of union organizers can no more prevent underprivilege than it can prevent hot weather or earthquakes. Even Russia and Roosevelt might begin to suspect that the forces of Nature are greater than the forces of Stalin or Jim Farley. They probably do suspect it, but when they permit their followers to suspect they

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suspect it, we shall have an end of Soviet Russia and the New Deal.

The truth is that there may be two or three million underprivileged persons in the United States. (The number increases, of course, as you expand "privilege" to include mental endowment and electric ice-cream freezers.) Not more than half of these ever were or ever will be workers. What most of them lack could be supplied only by God. It is unfortunate that even these should be "ill-nourished, ill-clad, and ill-housed", but certainly nothing done by any of the Stalins, Roosevelts, or John Lewises of history has appreciably improved their situation. Few of them are exploited by industry, however greedy or reactionary. Industry can't afford to be bothered with them, except through organized charity; but, as aforesaid, they are exploited nevertheless, and always have been, by kings, presidents, politicians, clerics, patent-medicine vendors, policy-number dealers, and almost anybody else who finds the trouble worthwhile. No amount of education, legislation, or other benevolence will ever make these people real workers, or enable them to pull their own weight.

There is another group in America, at the moment perhaps even more numerous, who are temporarily the victims of actual greed, or of economic conditions, or of fatuous efforts to improve those conditions. (This group would certainly be the more numerous if we included the labor that is not laboring because "Labor" won't let it.) Actual greed is a disappearing phenomenon. It can be dealt with by orderly process of law, and by sober, intelligent, nonviolent trade unionism. Like actual drunkenness, it was on its way out when we began experimenting with the Constitution. Economic conditions probably will continue to be good and bad alternately, and the best we can do about *that* is to carry the casuals until we can educate and enable them to carry themselves.

The third group, and the noisiest, is composed of "The Workers". Whether or not these are getting — or could be getting — "a living wage" depends upon your idea of the kind of living to which they are entitled. Certainly, comparatively few of them are *earning* or could earn more than they get. The man whose job can be done as well by every other man, and better by a machine, is in no position to dictate terms, and his dictation by mob-rule is a dangerous insolence. Demagogues and agitators can put

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this kind of labor in the saddle temporarily, but they never have been able to make it produce enough to keep the horse going. It might be possible to tax industry ninety-five per cent of its individual and collective earnings and savings for the benefit of these "underprivileged", or to give them a half-hour-day at a minimum wage of $1000 a week, as well as control of the production in which they are engaged, but with every arbitrary step in this direction the vitality of industry diminishes, and, at its vanishing point, labor will be found sitting down permanently, but without its Plymouth Rock pants.

III

The existing minimum wage in industries most affected by the current labor struggle is certainly not very much under $4 a day. Some unskilled labor is receiving a little less; some is receiving a great deal more. The American Iron and Steel Institute reports a weekly average of $26.30 "for all industrial wage-earners", and of $36.20 for steel workers. These figures fail to move me to the righteous wrath engendered by contemplation of the rewards of the majority of teachers, preachers, scientists, physicians, and small businessmen. I may be a heartless reactionary, though I am neither an employer nor an Economic Royalist, but, at least, I can summon the courage to admit what no politician in the world would dare whisper, and that is the conviction that a very large number of our population has no shadow of a right to electric ice cream freezers or pastel-tinted bathrooms. Moreover, I assert that most of this number wouldn't know what to do with them if they had them, and that the same thing is true, in a diminishing degree, of their use of education, increased leisure, increased emolument, and streamlined automobiles.

These are the unfortunate persons readily incited by any ambitious phrasemonger; readily impressed with their own importance and grievances; the pickets, and placard-bearers, and rock- and bomb-throwers — in short, "The Workers". In varying degrees, their willingness to walk out may be due to actual hardship, to envy and resentment, and to unwillingness to work when there is any excuse for not doing so. Impartial surveys have shown their average mentality to be below that of a twelve-year-old child. They are incapable of understanding that labor isn't

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

necessarily performed with a pick; no one has ever told them that the maladies due to overwork are unknown among manual laborers. Lacking the stamina for strain and prolonged effort, what this group asks is control without responsibility; partnership without participation in mental, physical, or financial investment; profit without risk, stress, or obligation. Curiously, their interest, confidence, and loyalty is given the men to whom they pay dues rather than to those from whom they receive wages; they had rather be slaves of a State than sharers in private enterprise. They are, in short, heroes sadly in need of debunking; a class that must be fed, clothed, and looked after, but to whose dictation Stalin himself has been fartherest from submitting, and to which no free, self-respecting, and potent people could possibly submit.

There is a fourth group, still probably the most numerous and always the least vocal, upon whose incorruptibility and indomitability our welfare depends. It is this group from which the Fords, Edisons, Carnegies, and other real leaders emerge. Its members are the workmen, as distinct from "The Workers". They are the men and women too busy with their jobs and too content in their homes to become the tools of demagogues, dictators, and agitators. If and when dissatisfied with conditions, they talk straight to the boss, or quit, alone or in a body, and find jobs elsewhere. Since they are the most desirable element, the threat of their going exerts a pressure that the other group can exert only through violence. Generally, these men recognize the partnership, the mutual reliance, and the inextricability of capital and labor. The majority are capitalists themselves, owning their homes, insurance, and savings accounts. Every employer knows them; any bystander can pick them out of a crowd; they are the clean men, the sober, upstanding men, the men with pride in their jobs. All they want is to be let alone; the only rights upon which they insist are the right to work, the right to do the best work of which they are capable, and the right to receive for that work exactly what it is worth.

The safety, stability, and continued progress of America are contingent upon treating this group fairly and honestly — as, I believe, there is the widest disposition to treat them. For this group, which has never forfeited public sympathy, there is always appeal to reason and to soberly-considered

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

law. The true enemies of Capital *and* Labor are those who, as Daniel Webster said exactly a hundred years ago, "constantly clamor against this state of things. . . . They excite the poor to make war upon the rich. . . . They carry out a mad hostility against all established institutions. They would choke up all the fountains of industry and dry all its streams. In a country of unbounded liberty, they clamor against oppression. In a country of perfect equality, they would move heaven and earth against privilege and monopoly. . . . In a country where the wages of labor are high beyond all parallel . . . they would teach the laborer that he is but an oppressed slave. What can such men want? What do they mean? They can mean nothing but disturbance and disorder."

The true friends of all classes and all states are those who contribute to the growing consciousness that Capital cannot exist without competent, satisfied, and prosperous Labor any more than Labor can exist without unharassed and productive Capital.

MATILDA'S GLASSES

By John Russell McCarthy

Matilda's glasses added a cold worth
To any easy natural warmth of earth.
Matilda's glasses misted the clear sun
And merged the gold of morning into dun
Of noon. Her glasses smudged the sharp desire
In young men's eyes, and governed her own fire.
Thus guarded, she has taken her human charm
Into the grave without life's slightest harm.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MISSOURI UPLIFT: A CASE HISTORY

By Ralph Coghlan

One of the notable characteristics of the present Uplift crusade in America is the dexterity with which its more cynical advocates hide behind the banner of Idealism. Every movement aiming at the betterment of the aged or the indigent is so fashioned, at some stage of its political life, as to bear the imprint of the grail; any critic of Do-Good legislation is, at some stage of his political life, certain to be excoriated as a heartless reactionary and an Enemy of the Masses. By playing subtly on the emotions of a fundamentally generous American people, the "idealists" have casually waved aside statements that ninety per cent of the Uplift measures now in operation are in the hands of corrupt politicians, and that virtually all the results of these measures are irreparably harmful to the citizens whom they are designed to benefit. When maneuvered into an untenable position by repetition of such embarrassing accusations, the Uplifters offer the classic defense: Where is your evidence?

Now it happens that the sovereign commonwealth of Missouri is known as the Show-Me State. And in the instance of the Do-Good crusade, the State of Missouri is in a position to show the rest of the country precisely what occurs when the banner of idealism is stripped from a venture into the More Abundant Life, revealing not a framework of altruistic ideas but a skeleton of sordid political corruption. The venture involved here is the Missouri old-age pension program, a movement which has been perverted by the politicians, with the joyous co-operation of citizens over seventy years of age, into the most astounding racket in the State's history.

An examination of this grandiose Townsendian scheme, in which the federal government is *particeps criminis*, will produce not partisan accusations and reckless charges, but facts and figures as incontrovertible as the vote-snatching methods which motivate them.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1930, according to United States census figures, there were 145,214 persons in Missouri aged 70-plus; today, it is estimated that the figure has grown to 158,429. Of these, 100,000, or two out of three, have filed applications for pensions, and approximately 75,000 are receiving monthly checks. In other words, one of every two persons over 70 in Missouri, the tenth richest State in the Union, is represented as having reached a stage of destitution entitling him to public support. The generously open-handed federal government pays half the bill for this Uplift measure, which will cost in the current biennium $34,000,000 for pensions and $2,125,000 for administrative expenses, or a total of $36,125,000. *This sum is more than seventy-six per cent of Missouri's entire expenditures out of general revenue in the last biennium.*

To procure a perspective on the gigantic fraud that has been practiced upon Missouri's taxpayers, it is necessary to go back to the Fall of 1932, when the voters were asked to approve an amendment to the State Constitution enabling the Legislature to grant pensions to persons over seventy "who are incapacitated from earning a livelihood and are without means of support". That language of the Uplift sounded innocent enough, and it was soon to appear even more guileless by the speeches made by the amendment's advocates. The leading spokesman was one Oscar Leonard, a high-powered press agent who bore the title of Executive Director of the Missouri Committee for Old-Age Security. Mr. Leonard's most effective argument was that the granting of pensions would abolish the county poorhouses, liberating the inmates to a Fuller and Freer Life, and that the cost of pensions would actually be less than the cost of poorhouses. At that time, the State had eighty-five such institutions, housing about 3000 people, and the total cost per inmate, including depreciation and interest on the investment, averaged $387 per year, a total of $1,161,000.

"Old folks are happier outside of poorhouses than in poorhouses," breathed Mr. Leonard. "It also happens to be more than fifty per cent cheaper to pension them than to keep them in poorhouses." Again: "The fact that it costs less to provide for aged dependents by a State pension fund than by local institutions has a great appeal to taxpayers." It was estimated by Mr. Leonard that not more than 9000 persons would be eligible for pensions in Missouri, and that the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cost, after the second year of operation, would be slightly more than $2,000,000 annually.

This visionary messiah had enthusiastic lieutenants. Dr. O. Myking Mehus of the State Teachers' College told the Monday Men's Forum of Maryville to "vote *yes* on the old-age pension amendment next Tuesday and thereby help decrease taxes in Missouri. Seventeen States have enacted old-age security laws and their experience has shown that it costs about one-half as much as it does in poorhouses. Not only is there a saving in taxes, but the pension system is more humane". J. Lionberger Davis, head of a St. Louis bank, gave his approval "because the old people of the State can be better taken care of in their own homes and because the pension system will be much more economical". Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, librarian of St. Louis, sounded a pathetic note: "It costs practically fifty per cent less to enable the aged poor to live in quiet dignity and decency than to herd them in poorhouses and break their hearts."

Mr. Leonard then took time out to denounce indignantly a "whispering campaign" exaggerating the number of Missourians who would be eligible for pensions, which he gave as 10,000 — just 1000 more than his earlier estimate. Perhaps he referred to a report of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, which figured the number at about 14,000 and the cost at $4,000,000. More likely, he had reference to the wild estimate of the National Association of Manufacturers, which thought 47,911 would be eligible. That estimate, however, was obviously the product of Tory minds who would go to any length of misrepresentation to damage an Idealistic movement, and it was immediately dismissed as preposterous.

So the voters, assured that they could shower happiness on the indigent aged and close the noisome poorhouses; assured, moreover, that it would cost less to do this than to keep them open, went to the polls and gave the amendment a smashing victory. The vote was 988,594 to 275,297. It was the biggest majority ever given to a constitutional amendment in the State's history. Thus did the Uplift come to Missouri, wearing royal raiment and uttering noble sentiments.

Well — that was just the night before the morning after. In the light of the grisly dawn that has followed, it appears that *not a single poorhouse in Missouri has closed its doors*, and that, in addi-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion to the burden of their continued maintenance, *the cost of old-age pensions is rapidly approaching $40,000,000 per biennium.*

II

The enabling act was signed by Governor Guy B. Park on June 4, 1935, to go into effect on August 27, 1935. In charge of its administration, the Governor appointed Allen Thompson, a horse-trainer and livestock dealer from Boss Tom Pendergast's Kansas City. A bureau headed by Mr. Thompson was set up in the department of W. Ed. Jameson, president of the Board of Managers of the State eleemosynary institutions, who promptly gave out a statement disquieting to 988,594 people who thought they had voted to abolish poorhouses. A newspaper dispatch of July 12, 1935, read as follows:

> The belief that the old-age pension law will eventually mean the elimination of the county poor farm is discounted by W. Ed. Jameson. In the first place, he said, a large percentage of inmates are under 70 years old, and not eligible for the pension. Also, it is often cheaper for counties to maintain the infirmaries than to support inmates through pensions in private residences.
>
> "We must also consider that the inmates of these places want and need companionship," he added. "These old folks would be lost if they couldn't sit around talking over the problems of the day with their cronies."

But the cat was still more or less in the bag. Mr. Jameson assured the people of Missouri that "we intend to administer the law so as to give the highest possible amount relative to the individual requirements, but there will be no waste". He thought that the number of Uplift pensioners would be about 12,000, and the cost would fall within the $2,500,000 appropriation.

Under the terms of the law, the applicant must be more than 70 years old; he must have resided in the State one year immediately preceding application and at least five of the preceding nine years; his income, if any, must be less than $30 a month; his property or interest in property must not exceed $1500, if single, or $2000, if married; he must have no child or relative able to support him; he must not receive aid from any other public fund; he must not be an inmate of a jail or an asylum. The act provided for payment of a maximum of $30 to single persons per month, and $45 to married pairs.

The joker in the law, however, was not in the requirements for eligibility, but in its administrative

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

set-up. It authorized each County Court (an elective body charged with supervising county affairs and not judicial in nature) to appoint boards which, in turn, were to pass upon applications for pensions. Naturally, the members of the County Courts seized this opportunity to butter their political bread and made partisan appointments to the pension boards, whose recommendations as to who should go on the rolls were, except in rare instances, final.

The pension rush began in September, 1935, with thousands of persons in line at the courthouses throughout the State, and with only fifty-two investigators to look into the applications. The quality of the investigators may be gauged by the four who were sent by Mr. Thompson to assist the St. Louis board, whose membership was much above the average. One was a former brewery salesman; another a plumber, discharged by the city water department for incompetency; the third helped his wife run a confectionery; the fourth was a delicatessen clerk whose schooling had not progressed beyond the sixth grade. All, however, had glowing political indorsements. In protest against these appointments and other conditions hampering any sort of proper administration of the pension law, the St. Louis board for a time closed its doors, notifying Mr. Thompson that "if political preference is to be shown to any worker or applicant, the St. Louis board will have nothing to do with any further activity under this act".

In the first month of the law's operation, *71,030 applications were filed*, five times as many as the pessimistic Chamber of Commerce estimate of eligibles, and 23,119 more than the obviously Tory estimate of the National Association of Manufacturers. The local boards, almost entirely free from any kind of supervision, began to assay the political gold mine which lay before them. Applications bearing the hearty recommendation of the local boards poured into Mr. Thompson's office at Jefferson City. Figuring each pensioner to be worth an average of six votes on election days, the local boards threw all conscience to the winds and began to certify practically everyone who looked gray enough to be 70. In some cases, when the applications did not come in fast enough, the local boards actually went into the streets and through the countryside, inviting persons over 70 to get in on the gravy.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By July, 1936, more than 48,800 pensioners were receiving monthly checks and, since the $2,500,000 appropriation, plus federal contributions, would not nearly provide each pensioner with $30 a month, as the law contemplated, the sums given each ranged from $7 to $12. Just how a person destitute, within the language of the amendment and the terms of the law, could live on such sums has never been revealed. In any case, the really deserving old people had to take from $7 to $12 in order to permit the chiselers to get on the rolls.

During the first year of the law's operation, 88,000 applications had been filed and pensioners were being added to the rolls at the rate of 1000 a day. As has been stated, the applications have now reached the neighborhood of 100,000, and, when and if the people approve a pending constitutional amendment to reduce the age to 65, which is necessary if further federal grants are to be received, most of the 100,000 or more within that age bracket may be expected to apply. In other words, the Uplift, so far as Missouri is concerned, is likely to continue onward and upward until that politically Utopian day when every inhabitant of the State, from birth to senility, is on the public payroll.

III

When the campaign of 1936 rolled around, the politicians had grasped the full significance of the effect of old-age pensions upon their public-spirited continuance in office. And so, shortly before the election, it was found possible to increase each pension $2 per month. According to the testimony of two members of the St. Louis board, published in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, "attempts were made to secure a list of those on the pension rolls by candidates for office". When such lists were obtained through one source or another, "our pensioners were deluged, prior to the election, with letters describing the candidate's solicitude for them and promising undying devotion to their interests".

Two classic instances of the kind may be cited. I have before me a letter dated October 29, 1936, signed by Forrest Smith, Democratic candidate for re-election to the job of State Auditor, who mails the Uplift checks to pensioners. Some of the passages in the letter to voters follow:

> I am taking this means of asking for your vote and influence in my race for a second term as State Auditor, because you, as an old-age pensioner, know I have been your friend. . . .
>
> Have you stopped to think what

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

might happen to your pension if another person is elected State Auditor who is not in sympathy with you and this law? Have you ever read in the papers or had a letter from my opponent saying he is sympathetic with you, or that he will work to get your pension increased? If you have not, why take any chances? You know an unfriendly person could and might stop your pension. If I am elected, your pension checks will be mailed you promptly as long as I am in office.

A letter dated October 26, 1936, was sent to pensioners by G. W. Gray, president of the Missouri Old Age Pensioners' Association, of Clayton, Missouri. Mr. Gray was interested in the candidacy of one Joseph A. Falzone. "If he is elected November 3," the letter reads, "we will have in the State Senate a friend who will fight for us to the very finish. He has also offered his assistance to collect for us the money due us from the State of Missouri referred to as 'back pensions' or 'retroactive pay'. According to the records you are entitled to back pensions of $80.00. . . . Above all things do not fail to vote on November 3 for Mr. Falzone."

These two bald samples of using the old-age pension law as a springboard into office are typical. But the old people of the Show-Me State hardly need encouragement. Long since, they have come to look upon their presence on the rolls not as a matter of need, but as a matter of right. And far from any stigma attaching to receiving monthly checks from the State, it has become a matter of pride to "make the grade".

Inquiry reveals that there is hardly any deception or subterfuge to which many old people will refuse to stoop in order to get a pension. In most places in Missouri, such tactics are not necessary, but where some effort has been made to conform to the law, the septuagenarians slyly misrepresent their circumstances. One investigator, reading a newspaper item that a woman had been robbed of $1600, recalled that her name was on the rolls as being destitute. An old man, living in a luxurious home and affectionately cared for by his family, applied for a pension so he could have some money to jingle in his pocket. He was entitled to a pension, he said, because he had paid taxes for many years. Another old-timer attempted to conceal the fact that he was receiving a pension from a corporation so that he could augment his income with a pension from the State. Numerous other instances concern recipients of tax money who hide the fact that they have lucrative jobs or hidden hoards.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An odd commentary is the attitude of the children of the aged. In thousands of cases, children well able to support their parents have no hesitancy in insisting they become public charges. These children, who have supported their parents in the past, look upon the old-age pension law as relieving them of all moral responsibility. It is no uncommon occurrence to find even expensively dressed women guiding their old mothers and fathers to the old-age pension office so that they may file applications.

At the last session of the Legislature, a new Social Security Law was passed in an effort to tighten up some of the obvious loopholes in the present set-up. As originally written, it was a good law; as passed through the gantlet of the politicians, it has numerous shortcomings, deliberately inserted so as not to deprive the officeholders of the juiciest racket ever to come their way. But the damage has been done, and there is not the slightest hope that the rolls will be purged of the undeserving, or that the perversion of the clear terms of the constitutional amendment will be corrected.

The lessons of Missouri's noble experiment are pretty clear. They reveal the method by which unscrupulous politicians, clothed in the garments of the righteous, manipulate sociological programs to serve their own ends. They indicate the fate in store for the bumper crop of Uplift measures now emanating from Washington. They emphasize the moral that the urge to Do Good in this great democracy is often indistinguishable from the urge to prostitute the character of impressionable people. Lastly, they point the warning that the United States as a whole — as in the case of Missouri — can entertain no hope of correcting the abuses and expenses of the old-age pension racket except through the medium of a popular revulsion, which will not only destroy the movement itself but a number of other "worthwhile" sociological cases which have been painstakingly nurtured for the past one hundred years.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOW I BECAME A FASCIST

Or

The Parable of My Grandfather's Cat

ANONYMOUS

Not so many years ago, you could hardly pick up a magazine without finding some sort of extremely personal article, written anonymously, and beginning: "I am a Forgotten Man". This present article might well have begun with a statement that "I am the Unforgotten Man". For such is, God knows, the case. I, who am an ordinary (and would once upon a time have been thought a respectable) citizen of the United States, am never for a moment forgotten by the swarming members of the Great Left-Wing. They have their eye on me every minute. They listen to my smallest utterance, and write interpretations of its ideology for the *Daily Worker*. They analyze my tastes, and find in them the stuff for sociological documents in the *New Republic*. They roar at me in the public prints, and berate me in private, and never for an instant cease their unrelenting Hymn of Accusation against me. Nobody, from La Pasionaria Browder himself to the beetle-browed tots of the New School for Social Research, ever tires of pointing his finger at me and screaming.

It all began a few years back, when a solemn Consistory of American Liberals, conferring together on the clarification of certain points of dogma, apparently decided that any man who was solvent, monogamous, and who had once set foot in a church, was to be known henceforth and irrevocably as a Conservative. When the first twenty people applied this label to me, I protested a little. But they soon showed me, of course, my abysmal self-ignorance, and after some fifty or sixty sessions of being told how my fondness for Mickey Mouse was really a sublimated covetousness for real estate, and how my enjoyment of gardening (which in my simplicity I had always thought a gentle and inoffensive pastime) was actually a

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subconscious gesture of capitalist arrogance, I gave in and believed. I accepted the Conservative label. In time, in fact, it became quite a comfort to me. The house that my wife and I almost own is only a $3000 one, and my income has to be subjected to considerable stretching sometimes in order for us to get along, but whenever things looked pretty bleak I could always cheer myself up by thinking, "Well, after all, I am a Conservative." It would give me a fine warm feeling of solidity and massiveness.

It wasn't long, however, before another conclave of the Cardinals of American Liberal Thought got together, and presently a brand-new Definition of Dogma was loosed from the Holy See at Washington. It seems there had been a slight mistake about me. After long meditation and prayer, and taking into consideration the facts that I almost owned my own house, was an employer of labor (that would be Mrs. Polatczek, who comes to us every other week for a day's cleaning), and was a taxpayer, there could now be no possible question but what I was clearly an Economic Royalist. I remember that when the first member of The Faithful brought me these tidings, it startled me a little; but after a dozen or two of my friends had talked the thing over with me I saw of course that they were indubitably right. The signs and stigmas were unmistakable. Had I not admittedly laughed unrestrainedly at a recent Laurel & Hardy movie which was, as they now explained to me, nothing but a cleverly camouflaged piece of Capitalist Propaganda? Was it not true that I had knowingly received into my house a newspaper containing pictures of a certain motion picture actress, and thus clearly licked the boots of William Randolph Hearst? Had I not, in a peculiarly brutal way, insisted that my Mrs. Polatczek eat her lunch in the kitchen instead of dining with me and my wife? There was no blinking charges like these. I stood amazed, indeed, that I had never seen myself in the right light before, and known myself for what I was. Unmistakably an Economic Royalist! The trifling fact that I had always been scared to death of Mrs. Polatczek and had never dared reprimand even her most glaring faults, had incomprehensibly blinded my eyes to the incontestable Truth. My *real* relation with Mrs. P. was that for years I had been standing with my foot on her neck, grinding her face in the dust, and, I dare say, now and then giving her a quick rabbit-punch for good measure.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Well, we went on being Economic Royalists for a year or two, my wife and I. Sometimes, to be sure, we deviated a little, and were occasionally slipped for a short time into the Bourbon class. But, by and large, I felt sure that at last my true nature had been established and classified for all time. "Royalist! Royalist!" I would murmur to myself, with a happy musing smile, as I studied our unpaid bills or debated the problem of how to settle with our plumber for putting in that new washer.

And then, all of a sudden, there was called yet another Council of the Deciders, and this time the whole United Front — from Mike Gold to the Rev. Reinhold Niebuhr — went to work on me. They evidently studied me from every conceivable angle, from my taste in hats to my net weight. They x-rayed me in the *People's Press,* and got Freda Kirchwey to do a fluoroscopic of me in the *Nation,* and I would not be at all sure that the *Daily Worker,* in its thorough way, didn't manage to perform a urinalysis. Having got all the available scientific data together, they went into a protracted huddle — pondered the facts that I had once been seen reading *Time,* that I had viciously refused to hiss a Metrotone newsreel of Pope Pius, and that I was on record as once having said that Leon Blum was a Jew — and presently emerged sweating from their conclave with the Final Divine Revelation of what I was.

I was a Fascist.

At first, of course, it was a little hard for me to grasp, because I had always thought General Franco a rather unattractive man and I had audibly tittered at a newsreel shot of Mussolini strutting through Libya; but pretty soon I was brought to realize that these were merely superficial reactions and didn't mean anything. I was a reader of the *Atlantic Monthly,* wasn't I? I had never sent H. L. Mencken a threatening letter, had I? Or thrown a stink-bomb? Or picketed the offices of the *Herald Tribune* with a placard saying: "Walter Lippmann Is A Scab"? Well, no; I had to admit that I hadn't. So finally they made it clear to me, and I knew The Truth. I saw how for years William Randolph Hearst had been subtly seducing me, how Cardinal Pacelli — with diabolical wile — had been poisoning my mind, how I had been all my life contributing to the perpetuation of serfdom in this country, abetting the exploitation of the masses, and metaphorically spitting in the workingman's beer.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oh, I am a Fascist all right. There is no getting around it. I am definitely earmarked to get a slug from William Z. Foster's howitzer when The Revolution breaks loose next Tuesday at twenty-minutes-after-seven.

In the short time remaining to me, though, I would like to recount the Parable of My Grandfather and The Cat.

My grandfather, a mild and always well-meaning man, was extremely fond of cats. And cats, not surprisingly, were in consequence always fond of him. Once, however, he acquired a cat which, for some unknown reason, persisted in regarding my grandfather with acute distrust. My grandfather tried to be propitiatory, to be amiable, to show the harmlessness of his intent, but it was all to no avail. The cat insisted on viewing my grandfather as a Deep-Dyed Ogre, a Foe of Catdom, a veritable *Führer* whose life was dedicated to abusing, as it were, the Under-Cat. My grandfather, as I say, was an amiable man, so he stood this maddening attitude of the cat's as long as he could, and tried to overcome it by being pleasant and reasonable with the beast.

But one day a great hullabaloo broke forth in my grandfather's house. As my grandmother told it later, it seems that my grandfather simply sprang up suddenly from his chair, seized a walking stick, and cried out in a great voice at the cat (which was lurking under a sofa, glowering sourly at him): "All right, by God, if you're going to persist in viewing me as a malevolent ogre, I'll *be* one for you!" Whereupon this most gentle and kindly of men pursued the cat all over the house until he cornered it in an upstairs room, where he proceeded to lick the daylights out of it.

And that is all. Just a simple parable, presented with my compliments to the hard-working Comrades of America.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MYTH OF THE TWO-GUN MAN

By Charles B. Roth

Part of every American's credo is his belief that the Wild West, during the era of Buffalo Bill and company, was populated almost exclusively by expert marksmen who could shoot the pips out of a playing card at fifty yards (or 100 or 1000). Virtually all early Western literature deals with marksmanship which has never been equaled — on paper. The very names of the pistol experts are ones to conjure with — Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Bat Masterson, Doc Carver, Billy the Kid, *et al.* But what about these famous shots? Could they really clip the buttons from an adversary's vest at thirty paces? Alas, the fact is that of all the myths foisted upon a gullible American public, the one about frontier sharpshooting is the most grandiloquent — and the most preposterous.

Take, for example, the notorious Mr. Hickok. Today, his fame is secure as that of a great pistoleer, perhaps the greatest; in one recent year, three Hickok biographies were published; he did not miss a man in all three. We are told he could hit a running enemy with a revolver every time at one hundred yards; he could crease a friend's hair at fifty paces, with no damage to hair or owner. Indeed, according to his palpitant biographers, he was never known to make an outright poor shot.

But actually — judged by modern standards of marksmanship — Wild Bill was pretty terrible. The proof lies in the targets which have come down to us from frontier times and in the targets that are being punctured every Saturday afternoon nowadays on a thousand practice ranges. Unless Hickok showed a tremendous improvement over his feats of the 'Seventies, he would be classified, if alive today, with the tyros of our police squads.

But we don't have to close our discussion with Wild Bill. A much better shot was Frank James, brother of Jesse; a much better shot, in fact, than Jesse himself. We have Frank James' best target preserved: it is signed by him: it

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was his pride. As a revolver performance, however, it wouldn't get passing notice nowadays, for the best Frank James could do was to keep twenty shots inside an eight-inch circle at twenty yards. Anyone who pretends to be a pistol expert today could hold those shots within a four-inch circle, and half a dozen of the holes might be covered by a fifty-cent piece.

I am not attempting to disparage frontier marksmen when I make these assertions. All things considered, they performed creditably. As Colonel Cody once remarked to me: "We men did the best job we could with the tools we had." In that remark you have an explanation of why frontier pistol yarns are false. The marksmen didn't possess guns capable of the performance claimed for them.

In the past half-century, the speed of the revolver bullet has doubled, the accuracy increased three times. On the frontier, with a cap and ball muzzle-loading pistol, the best shooting possible was six bullets in a six- to eight-inch group. That was as good as the weapon would shoot under ideal conditions, with machine rest. And no man ever shot better than his gun. With a modern revolver, one-and-a-half-inch to two-inch groups are average. In other words, the 1937 marksman owns a weapon vastly superior to that of the Western heroes. The modern weapon has six times the range: and is accurate up to 300 yards.

II

The best marksman of the old West was a mild little soldier you have probably never met in your readings for the good reason that he doesn't appear there. He was too busy with his job to talk to newspaper correspondents. But the annals of Nebraska history write him large. Major Frank North was his name, and he was commanding officer of the Pawnee Scouts, a body of Indian soldiers that served during the Indian campaigns. His brother, Captain Luther North, was associated with him. Often I have queried Luther North about frontier marksmanship.

"Did you ever see Wild Bill Hickok shoot?"

"Many times."

"Was he pretty good?"

"Yes. But Frank was better. Even Bill said so."

"Just how well could they shoot?"

"About as well as anyone, with the guns they had. They both could live up to the test of good marks-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

manship. Frank better than Bill. You put up a letter envelope ten paces away, and if you could keep all six shots in the envelope you were counted good. One of the shots had to be in the stamp which was pasted on the back of the envelope, in the center."

"How big were the envelopes?"

"Five inches square. And the stamp an inch square."

"That doesn't sound hard."

"It isn't — now," said Captain North. "It was then. We didn't have the guns."

"You've seen Hickok and your brother in shooting-matches?"

"Many times."

"And your brother would usually win?"

"I never saw him lose."

"What did Hickok think of that?"

"He took it good-naturedly. He would say: 'Frank, you can sure beat me when it comes to shootin' at these little black dots, but I can beat you when it comes to hitting men.' And this was true. Frank didn't shoot at men. Hickok did."

That statement explains why Hickok and Jesse James and Bat Masterson and the other frontier gunmen were superior to their foes — and would be superior to modern gunmen. It wasn't marksmanship that kept them on top, it was nerve.

Also in the hall of Western mythology is the two-gun man, who stalked into literature at an early date, a pair of enormous Dragoon revolvers strapped around his hips. At the first hint of trouble, he pulled both with a graceful movement, so fast the eye missed it. And then he shot both simultaneously. And swiftly! And he is still stalking through Western literature, the darling of pulp editors and their thrill-hungry readers. But there is no such thing as a two-gun man in the accepted meaning of the words. The character is a myth. In the first place, no man can use two guns effectively at the same time; and secondly, it was fatiguing enough to tote one four-pound gun, let alone two.

There were, however, real two-gun men on the frontier — of a different stripe from the blazing figures on pulp-magazine covers. They carried two guns, but used only one at a time. The second gun involved a deadly trick employed against their adversaries. For example, a gambler in a Western faro hall would be fully dressed with his orthodox holster weapon: a large Colt revolver. He wore it outside where the world could see;

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his customers were similarly attired. But gamblers, from habits engendered in following their profession, do not believe in giving the other fellow a break. So they evolved a way to kill him quickly with a minimum of risk to their own mortality chart. The second gun was small — perhaps a derringer. It was ingeniously concealed, in the left sleeve, in the crown of the hat, possibly in the top of a boot or even under a newspaper on the table.

The hapless cowboy, probably a youngster and full of whisky, robbed of his earnings by crooked cards, would become angry. He would start, in his befuddled state, to go for his holster. But the gambler, by making a decisive movement toward his hat, his sleeve, or under the newspaper, would beat him to it by seconds. The cowboy hadn't a chance; he rarely managed even to draw his gun. A Western historian tells me that three out of four shooting deaths on the frontier were caused not by big-holster revolvers, but by the spiteful little second guns.

I have been searching for fifteen years in books of Americana, on the covers of pulps, and in Western movies for sight of a handgun marksman actually shooting his revolver by holding it at eye-level and using sights. But the search has been vain. They all pull the gun from the holster, level it from the hip, and let fly. Hitting a one-inch bullseye at a hundred paces is commonplace; shooting birds on the wing is not beyond credence. And all from the hip. But the actual facts about hip-shooting are plain. It can't be done: it isn't humanly possible. An expert I know spent $200 to learn how to shoot a revolver well enough from the hip to hit a one-foot circle occasionally at ten feet. At longer range, he said, this style of shooting was as uncertain as a Chinese lottery.

And then there is hip-shooting's first cousin, a more spectacular member of the family, which goes by the name of "fanning". In place of firing the pistol from the hip by pulling the trigger, you tie the trigger back or remove it altogether, and then move the heel of the hand over the hammer, pulling it back, letting it fall, and then repeating the motion. The result is a simulation of the old Gatling gun. Stories of such marksmanship never fail to impress. But fanning, alas, is useful only on the Fourth of July. All that anyone has ever accomplished is the creation of unnecessary noise.

No man can fan a six-gun and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hit anything. In the outdoor magazines some years ago, a lively controversy thrived upon this subject, and an expert settled it in forthright manner. He posted a $1000 certified check, to go to anyone who could fan a revolver and make hits even at ridiculously short ranges. The offer was published widely. But no one ever tried to collect the $1000.

III

About a year ago I was down in the Kanab Creek country in Arizona, listening to stories about a marvelous citizen recently imported from Mexico, a gunman by the name of Lopez, hired by the local cattlemen's association to discourage Arizona citizens from thinking that every cow they saw was their own. He was a professional gunman and made a tremendous impression upon the citizenry by demonstrating the speed with which he could draw a six-gun and fire. One goggle-eyed citizen told me of seeing Lopez in action. "It didn't take him a fifth of a second to get his gun out," he proclaimed.

"Did you time him?"

"No. But he told us that."

"You saw him do it?"

"Sure."

"Did he hit where he aimed?"

"He wasn't shooting at anything. He just wanted to show us how fast he could get his gun into action."

Señor Lopez is astute: at least I hope he is. Because if he ever tries to pull a revolver from a holster and hit what he is aiming at, he will find it will take him approximately seven times as long as it did merely to draw and fire. The average time, secured after hundreds of trials with a stopwatch connected to an electrical device which noted the exact time the hand touched the butt and the exact time the cartridge was fired, is one and two-thirds seconds. Nevertheless, the myth of the quick draw is another which will not down. You kill it with facts, and it's out again inside of two weeks — because pulp magazines operate on a semi-monthly schedule.

There are a score of other frontier gun myths which might be discussed here, but I wonder if there is any need. The best rule to cover every case is to discount what you read by ninety per cent. Yet there is one point that needs attention. How did the myths get started? That traces back to one man — Edward Z. C. Judson. Of boundless imagination and unlimited confidence in the credulity of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Americans, he sat down one day and wrote a novel about a subject of which he was entirely ignorant. He signed the book "By Ned Buntline". And now you understand. Ned Buntline was the author of those paper-covered shockers you devoured in your youth. A Buntline hero could do anything with a gun that Buntline wanted him to. He shot from the hip, fanned, slew Indians from the back of a galloping mustang, and cut playing cards in half from the thin side.

Lying blissfully content in some hay-mow, your eyes bulged as you followed a Buntline hero. You believed what you read. And millions of other Americans read. And believed. And thus, right under our eyes, we had a mythology created — a mythology as lusty and persistent as that of ancient Greece — the mythology of frontier marksmanship.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY

By Sister M. Madeleva

Were I immortal only I would proffer
Tokens tremendous as a god can give:
Planets in leash, an earth whereon to live
With all October's fugitive gold in coffer,
Its moon a sorceress, its wind a scoffer,
Oceans it carries in a sandy sieve,
And stars aloof and undemonstrative.
Gifts casually infinite I could offer.

But as a woman and your love I bring you
The simple, homely things a woman must:
A little, human-hearted song to sing you,
My arms to comfort and my lips to trust,
The tangled moods that, Autumn-wise, I fling you,
The frail and faulty tenderness of dust.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIBERALISM COMMITS SUICIDE

By Lawrence Dennis

Nearly everyone nowadays seems to take it for granted that Liberal Democracy all over the world, even in the United States, has to stand or fall with the British Empire and the present international status quo. This belief, however, is historically untrue of the past and logically untenable for the present. Nevertheless, it may be used to lead the peoples of the United States, the British Empire, and France into another world war, forcing them to link their fortunes with those of collective security and Communism, or to resist with armed force any further expansion by Germany, Italy, and Japan. Such a course of action will prove suicidal for millions of people in the Liberal Democracies, and suicidal for their present type of civilization.

The argument of the collective security advocates is that democracy can survive only if all wars are prevented, all boundaries guaranteed, and all aggressors held in perpetual check by the supremacy of a United Front. The practical defect of this philosophy—the philosophy of the League of Nations—is that there is no preventive of war, never has been, and never can be as long as human nature preserves certain qualities which today show absolutely no signs of diminution. It will not prevent strife to line up the Have-Gots—America, England, and France—against the Have-Nots—Germany, Italy, and Japan—or the Liberal angels against the Fascist devils. Such an alignment would only make a world war of what might be, and would have been in the nineteenth century, a localized conflict. Of all the absurdities that have ever come to be seriously advocated as public policies, the threat of a war to prevent war is the most absurd. For the threat is effective only if carried out.

Logically, as well as historically, there is everything wrong with the idea that Liberalism, peace, and collective security are indivisible. It is as contrary to the logic of the present as to the facts of the past. If this suicidal idea is made the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ruling policy of the three Liberal nations of today, two tragic consequences seem inevitable: In the first place, if democracy can survive only if peace continues unbroken and existing territorial arrangements remain unviolated, then democracy is doomed, because peace is always broken and boundaries always redrawn by the next war. In the second place, if democracy has in the future always to fight world wars and can never again participate in or stand aside from a small, localized conflict, such as the present disputes in Spain and China, then democracy is doomed to perish in the throes of a modern Armageddon.

Let us turn to the historical record. Liberal Democracy may be traced back to Cromwell's revolution in 1648, to the Magna Carta in the thirteenth century, or to ancient Greece. In its modern form, it may be said to have commenced with the American and French Revolutions. From these great upheavals down to 1914, democracy made swift progress throughout the world. Even China and Mexico, toward the close of this period, were advancing rapidly toward the goal. (Today, of course, they are moving with equal rapidity toward Communism and chaos.) Was this period from the American Revolution down to the outbreak of the World War one of universal peace and respect of treaties, international law, and the rights of weaker peoples? Emphatically not. Yet that was the dawn and high noon of democracy. The progress of Liberalism was not retarded by our conquest of Florida, Mexico, or the Philippines, nor by the British conquest of the Boer Republic or the French conquests in Africa and Indo-China. The most predatory and least defensible war of the nineteenth century, that of Prussia against France in 1870, in which France lost two provinces and a billion-dollar indemnity, was followed by a great advance of democracy in both countries.

Even Napoleon's wars and territorial conquests were among the most creative forces in the spread of Liberalism through Europe during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. As much, however, cannot be said for the war of Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George, the two greatest Liberals of their century; nor can as much be said for the Treaty of Versailles or that *chef-d'oeuvre* of twentieth-century Liberals, the League of Nations. Napoleon's works, notably his Code, prepared Europe for democracy, whereas the League and the peace treaties prepared

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it for Fascism. The chief forces opposed to Liberalism early in the nineteenth century centered around the Holy Alliance, which stood for universal peace, the prevention of war by collective action, the guarantee of the status quo, and, generally, the same ideals as the League. Notwithstanding, then, the fact that each of the three now-foremost democracies added millions of square miles of territory to its dominion through wars of aggression during the 140 years prior to 1914, we are asked today to believe that war and aggrandizement are incompatible with liberty in the United States and the British Empire!

The Pilgrim fathers who shot Indians between prayers and helped lay the foundations of democracy in the United States had no such notions. The men who founded a nation in America by waging two wars with England, one with Mexico, two with Spain, and innumerable conflicts with the Indians, the men who won Florida, Texas, California, Oregon, and the West, were not after Making the World Safe for Democracy. They were after making a home, and making it safe for themselves and their children. This they did by taking the land from others and shooting Indians and Mexicans.

The satisfied great powers today are Liberal Democracies precisely because of, and not in spite of, their many successful wars, land grabs, and revolutions. The dissatisfied nations are Fascist because they did not share these successful experiences. Those "Liberals" now writing impassioned polemics against Fascism fail to identify interest conflicts with ideological conflicts. The significant "We or They" aspect of the present world situation is that "We" Americans, Englishmen, and Frenchmen, are not going to share our nineteenth-century gains with those referred to in H. F. Armstrong's recent book [1] as "They". Can we consistently, at the same time, deny their right to follow our examples in respect to the backward areas which we have not yet appropriated? If we choose to deny that right, then we must expect to back up the denial ultimately in the greatest war of history.

It is sheer bad faith for an American or an Englishman to say that "They" can buy freely of our raw materials. To buy, "They" must be able to sell. Present American and British tariffs make it impossible for the underprivileged nations to sell enough to purchase necessary

[1] *We Or They*, by Hamilton Fish Armstrong. New York: *Macmillan*.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

raw materials. Only so long as gullible American purchasers of foreign bonds supplied funds, could Hitler be kept out of power in Germany. Equally absurd is it to talk about equality of economic opportunity in a world in which the British, Americans, and French dominate nearly two-thirds of all territory and resources, and virtually exclude immigrants.

What the dissatisfied countries are really challenging is not Liberalism, but the Liberal attempt to check further expansion, coupled with Liberal maintenance of tariff and immigration barriers. If there is to be conciliation, it must take place in the realm of interests or ends, rather than in the fields of rationalization which receive so much exploration by our Lippmanns, Armstrongs, and Dorothy Thompsons. It is the contention of this article that the interests of the satisfied and dissatisfied could be reconciled by a large measure of concession and license; but that if concessions be denied, no true interest of the Haves could be served by another world war to check expansion by the Have-Nots.

II

There might be no such thing as Fascism today, Germany might be a great democracy second only to England both in Liberalism and colonial possessions, and the World War might never have taken place if only, at the turn of the present century, England and France had decided to accept German expansion at the expense of Russia and Central and Southeastern Europe. This statement, of course, is not susceptible of proof, but neither can it be disproved. It remains demonstrated, however, that the victory of the Liberal United Front in 1918 has proved more disastrous to democracy than all the imperialist and nationalist aggressions of the preceding 150 years. Not only have the dissatisfied turned to Fascism, but the satisfied are fast drifting toward the same authoritarian ways.

After the defeat of Napoleon, the victorious Allies at Vienna sought to leave the defeated satisfied. Fortunately for democracy, the Allies in 1815 were headed, not by Liberals like Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau, but by hard-minded Conservatives and realists acquainted with the limits of power. In 1815, Wellington wrote to Lord Castlereagh:

> We must, if we take this large cession, consider the operations of the war as deferred till France shall find a suitable opportunity of endeavoring to regain what she lost; and, after having

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> wasted our resources in the maintenance of overgrown military establishments in time of peace, we shall find how little useful the cessions we have acquired will be against a national effort to regain them.

The Versailles victors, however, gave no adequate thought to the future war potentialities of the vanquished. Not content with humiliating peace terms, the Allies created a new irritant for the losers —forced acknowledgment of war guilt. The peace terms, particularly the Reparations payments and the survival of the newly-created political entities, were impossible of fulfillment. These could only produce the conditions in Europe which are now the nightmare of Liberals.

The leaders at Versailles should have made either a soundly military or a soundly Liberal peace. They did neither. Unlike Napoleon or Wellington, they were neither soldiers nor administrators. They were merely experts at winning popular elections and manipulating mass opinion. The war-guilt clause was a typical example of a Liberal politician's idea of a sop to win votes in a British election. A good soldier would have insisted (as many did at Versailles) that if the purpose was to humiliate Germany, it should be carried out logically by a thorough disarming and dismembering of Germany. A good soldier, a good political scientist, or anyone with a little common sense, would have insisted (as many did at Versailles) that if the purpose was to Make the World Safe for Democracy, then harsh terms must be avoided; existing political arrangements must be disturbed as little as possible; moderate reforms must be undertaken only within the limits of the practical; and, most important of all, a Europe-wide régime of virtually free trade must be imposed on victors and vanquished alike. The peace punished, exacerbated, and demanded the impossible, but did not incapacitate the defeated for future war. The peacemakers reasoned from premises contrary to fact and experience; collective action has always made, rather than prevented, war in the past.

Liberal Democracy, which flourished on the localized conquests of the nineteenth century, cannot survive world wars of today's magnitude. The reasons are obvious. The nineteenth-century conflicts could be waged largely by professional armies and with a minimum of disturbance to business. Today, however, any major war must be fought between comparative equals, with all the resources of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both sides. It must be a totalitarian war of the nation-in-arms type. A war of this kind involves the substitution of National Socialism for Liberal Democracy. If such a war is prolonged, it will be impossible to revert from the war-regimented scheme of things to the ways of Liberal Democracy.

The dissatisfied powers have today adopted Fascism because they have understood that the democracies intend to oppose their further expansion while maintaining high tariffs and immigration barriers, wherefore great wars must follow, wherefore the new authoritarian order is indicated as the only scientific basis for fighting such wars. All this is logical. But not so the determination of the democracies to set a limit to the expansion of the dissatisfied nations. Those who now affect a militant Liberalism, without understanding the first principles of militarism and force, argue that if the satisfied do not impose their will on the dissatisfied, the latter will go on from the subjugation of the weak to the mastery of the world. While this argument cannot be disproved, it certainly finds little support in history. Great Britain, the United States, and France were the world's chief land-grabbers during the 150 years before 1914. Yet today, they are so surfeited with possessions that they are strongly indisposed to further wars of conquest.

The far-flung British Empire today presents far more points of vulnerability than elements of strength for offensive warfare. The British fleet might still be able to defeat the combined fleets of Germany, Italy, and Japan in one grand engagement, if the latter were obliging enough to accommodate the British with such an opportunity. But it is most doubtful that the British fleet, or any fleet within their power to maintain, could, without combined American and French aid, crush the naval and air power of Germany, Italy, and Japan operating against Great Britain all over the world. It seems reasonable to suppose that expansion by Germany, Japan, and Italy would eventually encounter the same weaknesses of bigness. The deeper Germany got into Central, Eastern, or Southeastern Europe or Russia, the greater would be her problems and the weaker her potentialities for attacking France or England. The more involved Italy becomes in Africa, or Japan in China, the safer they are likely to become for Western Europe. The fighting in Spain demonstrates the strength of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

defensive in modern warfare where the opponents are evenly matched. Italy's victory in Ethiopia over a backward people has not enhanced her power for an offensive war in Europe. Contrary to the argument of many Liberals, it is not territorial expansion but just the reverse — prolonged frustration and poverty — which is most likely to render a populous nation bellicose.

What is most ignored by the Liberal and Conservative advocates of an anti-Fascist United Front is that the ousting of the present régimes in Germany, Italy, or Japan could not be expected to lead to democracy. Still less can it be believed that any military victory would yield compensation in reparations or enlarged markets. The Have-Gots could win small wars of conquest in backward countries during the nineteenth century, but they cannot win a war against the Have-Nots today. It is a case of heads the Communists win, tails the Liberals lose. The Communists have long understood this and prophesied the ultimate triumph of Soviet Russia through the collapse of Capitalist civilization in an all-embracing, suicidal contest. It is not strange that they should now be trying to sell such a war to their future victims. The wonder is how successful such salesmanship is proving when the intentions of the peddlers are so frankly disclosed.

There are, of course, many moral, ethical, and legal reasons why the satisfied nations should make war on the dissatisfied rather than permit their expansion at the expense of weaker peoples. I am not discussing these reasons, however, because I am concerned with the question whether democracy will commit suicide by fighting another world war. Such reasons for trying to check the dissatisfied will not stop them from fighting, nor will these moral, ethical, and legal considerations turn any war of the satisfied into a triumph of Liberalism. The sole hope of preventing a suicide lies in creating a will to live. And Liberalism today seems possessed merely of a will to die for some cause other than its own. It would seem to me that suicide is bad ethics, bad morals, and bad law.

III

To clinch the argument of suicidal madness, it is necessary only to stress the utter absurdity of the growing Liberal alliance with Communist Russia. The underlying philosophy of that alliance is

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

palpably fallacious so far as Liberal interests are concerned. The logic runs as follows: Soviet Russia, by reason of being the largest nation in area, population, and natural resources, wishes to preserve the status quo. The democracies have a similar interest. The Have-Nots, however, are not so situated or disposed. Therefore, the democracies and Russia should make common cause against all challengers. The fatal flaws in this reasoning are as follows: While Russia momentarily may be satisfied with her frontiers, as the motherland of Communism she is not satisfied with the political, social, and economic conditions in the democracies. Therefore, while Russia is anxious to exchange hands-off guarantees with England, France, and the United States, she is preparing for World Revolution. These guarantees are desired by Russia solely as means to the end of revolution.

If the Communist dream should come true, disputes about territorial security would continue raging in the future between different Communist States exactly as they have raged in the past between different States under Capitalism or Feudalism. But once Communism and world revolution become important, as they have in countries like present-day Spain, France, Italy, and Germany, questions of national boundaries become secondary to social, economic, political, institutional, and personal problems. Precious little interest should a French bourgeois have in the geographical status quo of Czechoslovakia or Siberia if his personal situation is soon to be altered by a Communist firing squad. Americans who think Russia would make a good ally against Japan for the defense of the Philippines or the Open Door in China (which is now about closed), should first consider what might be their personal position if America were allied to Russia and John L. Lewis were President. Better by far for America to abandon all its Pacific possessions and allow Japan a free hand in the Far East than to have the Communist class-war brought to our shores by an alliance with Soviet Russia. Any idea of solidarity between democracy and Communism is fantastic. The two systems can never have anything in common except a common battlefield, and, possibly, a common grave.

Perhaps the only sound hope for democracy today lies in the subconscious feudal and military instinct of the British Tories who

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happen now to be in power. Things would look brighter for democracy, of course, if the British had a Wellington or a Castlereagh and not an Eden or a Chamberlain in charge of foreign affairs. Luckily, the old Liberal Party is dead and the militantly Liberal and pacifist Labor Party is badly disorganized. As noted before, the best friends of real Liberalism have been the hard-minded realists; its worst enemies are the Lloyd Georges and Woodrow Wilsons who would build democracy on foundations of dreams. If the British henceforth enjoy a Tory leadership, it may repress the excessive zeal of militant Liberalism and shape policy in the cold light of reality.

The next best hope for peace would be to have in America an intense wave of nationalism, which would convince the English and French that America was determined to let them fight single-handed in any future conflict. Such a conviction might avert a major war for a long time. If the British were certain they could not count on us in an emergency, they would be more likely to keep out of it. The worst of American Anglophilism is that it gives us great liabilities without corresponding benefits or voice in British policy. It means that, if Great Britain gets into serious trouble, we must come to her rescue. Yet, if we were now to venture suggestions about British policy, we should be told to mind our business. In British Imperial trade, we have no preference. Indeed, we can't even collect our dues from them.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, in a speech delivered July 2, 1937, during the height of an international crisis, declared: "I hope the United States will not think me presumptuous if I say we have the same confidence in their outlook upon the great problems of the day as we have in that of the British Empire." More directly stated, England now expects every American to do his duty in the defense of the Empire. How are Americans made to believe that they owe such a duty? By being propagandized with the idea that liberty and democracy the world over would perish if the British were to lose a war or to be forced by diplomatic pressure to make substantial concessions to the dissatisfied powers. What makes this propaganda doubly dangerous just now is the unusual combination of money, brains, and moral idealism advancing it. Radicals who used to denounce imperialism and pacifists who used to denounce all

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wars are now clamoring to be led by the British Tory imperialists in one more war to save the British and French Empires, and, of course, liberty and democracy as well.

The Radicals and pacifists are really animated with the fury of despair and frustration. G. D. H. Cole, Britain's most effective writer in the Socialist ranks, has just admitted in an article entitled, "Can Capitalism Survive?" in the symposium *What is Ahead of Us?*, that there is no immediate chance of bringing about Socialism in England. There is, of course, less in the United States. The Radicals, therefore, see their only chance of immediate self-expression and glory in a great war against Fascism, a crusade to save imperialism and democracy. If they cannot win the masses to the Labor Party, they may be able to egg the Tories into a suicidal war. After all, warmongering is about the easiest objective for any pamphleteer or propagandist.

The idea on which this propaganda is based, as we have already seen, finds no support in the history of the past or the logic of the present. But nothing is easier than for human nature to be swept to its destruction by a wave of unreasonableness. Liberalism won its three great revolutions under Cromwell, George Washington, and Napoleon. It has since won many wars of conquest at the expense of backward peoples. It has advanced in spite of small wars between Liberal States. It has really lost but one war, that of the United Front in 1914–1918 to save democracy. When England fought Napoleon, America, the second great democracy, fought England — the War of 1812. This fact probably had much to do with the sensibleness and moderation of the victors at Vienna as compared with the harshness of the victors at Versailles a century later. The Liberal Revolutions have been won. The Communist Revolution is now on.

In the face of the Communist Revolution, Liberalism has a conservative interest. But, as this article has sought to show, conserving Liberalism, or the fruits of the Liberal Revolutions, is not a matter of conserving the status quo or the present possessions of every Liberal State. Nor does conserving Liberalism mean conserving Russian Communism. Conserving Liberal Democracy today would seem to mean preserving, as far as possible, conditions similar to those under which Liberalism rose and flourished. Those conditions

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have never included united fronts or collective security. Those conditions, however, have involved extreme national individualism and competition, the true spirit of Liberalism. Nothing could be more alien to this spirit than the new spirit of international collectivism which the Anglophiles and the pro-Leaguers would foist upon Americans.

Finally, let it be repeated that those who now ask for a United Front of the Liberal Democracies for the conservation of Liberalism and the status quo are asking for world war. Such a war must necessarily create conditions immediately destructive of Liberal institutions and ultimately productive of chaos and Communism. Let it be recalled that Liberalism has never flourished on international combinations for the restraint of the dissatisfied. On the contrary, it has thriven on a plethora of opportunities for the dissatisfied to help themselves. If the present tariff and immigration systems of the satisfied democracies are maintained, and there is no likelihood of their early modification, then the dissatisfied must be left to emulate the self-help examples of the now satisfied Democracies — or else all modern civilization must be undermined, if not destroyed, in another world war.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DEEPER THAN ATLANTA

By Jackson Mathews

BULLETS IN BATON ROUGE
LONG LIVES

My boy was gwine his ways like the boy I made him
With his thumb in his suspenders, Lawd, and they shot him.
Why, good Lawd, did you let em? Why did you let em
Pull their gun on my boy? Wasn't hurtin nobody,
Merciful God, he wasn't doin nothin to nobody,
Nothin but his own blessèd business in Louisiana.

KINGFISH KILLED — DELTA DICTATOR DIES

Lawd, just look at all the roads that aint paved,
And all the po white chillun in Louisiana.

HUEY IN HEAVEN — LONG LIVES

Deeper than Atlanta
Down in Louisiana
Nursed by niggers
Raised with hill-billies
At circus sideshows
Chawed by chiggers
You know how it is.

Down in Louisiana
Struttin with jiggers
Dozin in the lilies

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bullyin the bozos
Pullin triggers
You know how it is.

Down in Louisiana
Bull-dozin the niggers
Fingerin fillies
Seen among so-so's
Suckin big cigars
Nosin in big business
Jugglin the figgers
Slicker'n city-slickers
You know how it is.

Down in Louisiana:
Deeper than Atlanta.

Huey took to the stump and stirred
Farmers and mosquitoes with his word,
With his waving arms and his palmetto fan.
Politics is sure hell and sweat and fun.
"You birds want to know what power is?
It's legally entrenched lawlessness.
Just give me a grab at it, I'll give you bucks
Plenty of paved roads and free schoolbooks.
Why, every last one of you po white trash
Will wash in bathtubs and use a comb & brush.
I'll educate yo younguns in shonuff schools
And give you homes, radios, and automobiles.
And five thousand dollars free of debt
And twenty-five hundred a year after that.
I'll swap you hill-billies a bungalow for a shanty,
Louisiana's got to face the fact of plenty.

Sharecropper croppin by the old bayou
What makes me do you like I do?

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Why, hell, I got a university down in Baton Rouge that cost me
$15,000,000, that can tell you why I do like I do.
I built em a plant that'll make Tulane's
Look like the grammar school of New Orleans.
I hired em a football team of giants,
And the best brains money can buy teach em science,
Why, in five years our boys'll be so brainy
They'll make the weather be dry or rainy
Whenever they wanta so's to suit the crops.
You farmers'll feed ice-cream & cake for slops
To your razor-back hogs, you'll be so rich.
And I tell you now, they aint a gulley nor a ditch
In North Louisiana, just as sho as you born,
That wont be as smooth and green as a lawn.
Why, my brainy boys can make sugar cane grow
On a piece of ground so doggone po
You cant raise a umbrella on it. That's so!
I want you sharecroppers to be your own boss,
Own your own farms, and not plow no horse
But a big tractor pullin fifteen plows;
And a car in yo barn keepin company with the cows;
And the cows not keepin no company with ticks,
But them kind of little weak-kneed cows that sucks.
Yo women can stay in out of the field
And do the tendin to their own yield.
Work aint so powerful hard by God
With lectric lights and a paved backyard
And waterworks sproutin round the do.
God knows we wont stand to be po no mo.

Learned professors in their laboratories
Nod their heads among ruined categories.

"When I have done my *do* for Louisiana:

Look out, America!
I'll grab you by

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Florida tit
And the Texas thigh
And throw you skyhigh.
I'll dehorn you of Alaska
Wean you from your Mexico.
This is Huey Long speakin on the radio.

Look out, America!
You've got me to deal with now.
Look out for filibusters, Long's blizzards
Of truth, you pie-eatin sons of buzzards,
You senator boys: I'm usin airplanes
To tote truth to Washington from New Orleans."

BULLETS IN BATON ROUGE
SAVIOR SHOT
DICTATOR DEAD

jooba up
jooba down
jooba all around town
jooba dis
jooba dat
jooba kill a yaller cat
JOOBA!

Death does not smile: death is the fixed feature.
Death is busy fixing an uncertain future.
Death is a dour doughface mixing sour dough:
A dictator sinks in it deeper than other men do.
Heavier than other men in human affairs
He sinks to the level of the lower despairs:
Low among the dough dolls of death he lies
And stirs to vacate stuff too thick to rise.

If Huey had arisen and borne his bullet
He would have had in him the martyr's nugget,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The lode to magnetize the people's mind
And point all noses into the same wind,
While our learned prophets and pundits ponder
The immediate re-establishment of wonder.

LONG BIER BORNE TO BURIAL BODYGUARDS GUARD BODY

But death will not smile: death dictates terms
To dictators concerning the living wage of worms:
Next year Kai Shek or warlords of the West
Will smell like last year's yellow-hammer nest.
Dictators, living, load their visions down
With memories of Rome or a Five-year Plan,
Soak the rich, or tamper with a supreme court
Forgetting a dictator's life is supremely short.
When strict death shows them how to behave
This lumber tumbles after them into the grave
And there weighs them deeper and deeper down,
Deeper than Atlanta, deeper than Atlanta town.

Roll them bones, Lawd
Read em and weep:
Deeper than Atlanta
Laid to sleep
Deeper than Atlanta's dark shadow
Six feet deep in his first tuxedo.

Laid where earthworms
Nudge him not yet with their noses
For the best coffin
Money can buy encloses
Him close around
Safe from the roots of roses
Quieter than the living ever will be
Until an ice age heal the sea.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE DISARMAMENT HOAX

By Fletcher Pratt

"On Thursday, December 15, 1921," said the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* of December 16, 1921, "the Race for Armaments came to an end." The occasion for such an exalted statement was the signature of the Washington naval limitation treaties. Gullible editors all over the world echoed the *Ledger's* sentiment in high-sounding phrases, deaf to the queasy comments of admirals, who were merely professional militarists and therefore unable to appreciate the remarkable coup the politicians had accomplished by not listening to them.

Today, sixteen years after the event, it has become clear that the hard-headed admirals were right and the sentimental editors wrong; that the whole naval-reduction business was only one more maneuver in the familiar racket of bilking the taxpayer; and that "naval limitation" limited nothing, saved nothing, improved nothing, and achieved nothing, save for a slight change in the sinister *papier maché* mask behind which the general staffs of the world are at this moment preparing for the next Armageddon. None of the much-publicized treaties has moved the human race by so much as an inch toward that goal of Peace which the pacifists talk so violently about; the only material result of "limitation" has been a highly negative one — the process by which the nations of the world have ceased building warships at random and have concentrated all their technical skill and money on the task of building warships aimed at specific enemies.

At this writing, the treaties are dying in an atmosphere of international distrust and hatred, with charges of evasion flying in all directions, the armament situation far worse than it was in 1913 or 1919, and few persons really believing that any of the signatories will observe the weak "notification" clauses any longer than it is politically expedient to do so. In short, there is not now, nor has there ever been, any such thing as naval disarmament or naval limita-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, in spite of the fine phrases of the Versailles Treaty and the preamble to the minutes of the Washington Conference.

There are several possible methods of accounting for this paradox. The simplest is to consider the men who drafted the Washington agreement as tools of the munitions makers, and to impute to them a deliberate intent to deceive in a spirit of cynical hypocrisy. This is the explanation accepted enthusiastically by the great Left-wing. But it has the serious defect of ignoring statistical possibilities, of positing the existence of a gigantic plot embracing all the responsible governmental officials of the world, and of assuming that the international armorers have been able to buy them all, including the commissars of Soviet Russia, who of course should be immune from such Capitalistic bribes. A second simple explanation is that we are ruled by congenital idiots — an attractive yet sophomoric theory, which presupposes an atrophy among all the best minds the various governments of the world have been able to find to carry on their business for a decade and a half. But surely, now and then there must appear a reasonable man among them.

No — such glib explanations do not make sense, and neither does a doctrine of repeated coincidence, or for that matter, any other, *except* the assumption that the representatives of the nations who met at Washington in 1921 did not possess the celestial powers they thought they had when they signed the naval agreements. In other words, they signed to renounce the use of navies in war, which was an effort to control the elemental forces of nature by denying their existence — as futile as an attempt to treat syphilis with facial unguents.

II

It is important to remember that nations do not build warships for the fun of seeing them sail past in majestic review. The World War underlined the technological change in naval construction; demonstrated that the cost and complication of the modern warship are such that its characteristics are necessarily a compromise among various desirables, the conditions of which compromise are the strategic possibilities of the possible war in which the ship is intended to fight.

The point becomes clear by a brief examination of the fleets left in being by the close of the World War. England possessed fifty-six

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ships of the first line (battleships and battle-cruisers), nominally the best fleet in the world, but only nominally, for many were obsolescent pre-war types, and the remainder had been built during and for the purpose of the war with Germany, and had the special characteristics and defects imposed by war in the North Sea. That is, being intended to operate near their base, the fuel capacity was low, and as the base was England — rich in coal, poor in oil — they were coal-burners. Speed was high, handiness great, guns powerful, armor weak. Behind them stood a huge fleet of small craft, of which only the light cruisers, intended to run the trade-lanes against German surface raiders, were valuable for any other purpose than a European conflict.

The American navy of the same date had only thirty-three first-line ships in the water, with sixteen new ones completing, but these sixteen were the essential fact behind the conference, for they were the vessels of the Wilson program, undertaken early in 1916 when the methods of the British blockade had drawn from the President the exasperated determination to "build the biggest navy in the world, and then do as we please". In other words, they were built against England, larger than anything she had, more powerfully armored, better armed; they would give us at least a twenty-five per cent superiority over the British navy once they were afloat. But they were not afloat, only building, and with Congress balking at appropriation bills, it was possible they would never float.

The first-line fleets of France and Italy had both been intended for operations against the always small navies of Austria and Turkey, and hence were negligible. The Russian and German fleets had been wiped out by the war. In the whole world, the Japanese navy alone was still useful for the purpose for which it was designed — to keep the Anglo-Saxon powers from interfering in any action the Japanese wished to take on the western shore of the Yellow Sea.

Two other points are worth noting as contributory — the fact that the Anglo-Japanese naval alliance was up for renewal, and the fact that the surrendered German battleship *Ostfriesland* had recently been sunk by American air bombs, an event which, when announced without technical details, had created doubt as to whether battleships were any more use at all.

Summarize it this way: everyone was hard pressed for money

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

after the spending spree of the war; everyone had battleships, very costly to repair and maintain; and no one but Japan had any conceivable use for those battleships. The possibility is strong that if the Washington conference had never been held, every nation would have done exactly what it was bound to do by the conference treaties — *i.e.*, scrap large numbers of obsolete pre-dreadnaughts, halt construction on new battleships, and launch programs of technical experiment with the new naval weapons brought to light during the war, notably, aircraft and torpedo-carriers. Similar retrenchment had occurred after every naval war for over a century: after the Napoleonic Wars, after our Civil War, the Crimean, and the Franco-Prussian, the only difference being that on those occasions, no magnifico called in the newspaper reporters and stuffed them with hooey about the End of the World Armament Race.

The Washington conference accomplished nothing else whatever: when the idea of limiting cruisers came up, Mr. Balfour for England talked about "the hard, brutal necessities of plain and obvious facts"; France would have nothing to do with any limitation on submarines, nor America on destroyers. Not even the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance nor stoppage of work on the American Pacific fortifications could truly be attributed to the treaty; Harding's "normalcy" Congress had failed to appropriate for the forts, and at least a month before the call to the conference, Austen Chamberlain had declared in Parliament that "we shall be no party to any alliance directed against America" — which, with Germany and Russia out of the way, was the only possible purpose of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

No one had any intention of actually sacrificing anything, but in the prayer-meeting atmosphere of Washington, 1921, it was fatally easy for each party to believe that it had sacrificed much — England, a magnificent fleet-in-being against "paper ships" from the other seapowers; America, a still more magnificent fleet against vessels already bound for the scrap-heap; Japan, the determination to carry her arms into the land that offered an outlet for her surplus population; France and Italy each, dominion of the Mediterranean. When admirals in every one of the signatory countries leaped into print with articles describing the treaties as a sacrifice of English (American, French, Japanese,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Italian) interests, the impression that they had received a square deal all around seemed confirmed.

The dangerous myth here was not one concerning any "sacrifice" of interests, or that the conference was in reality just one more diplomatic deal in a game that had been going on since Pharaoh, but that the delegates, in their sincere insincerity, believed they had laid the foundations of a new principle of mutual concession toward disarmament, and that they so convinced the folks back home. The logical responsibility of the treaty was the renunciation of naval war as an instrument of national policy; and none of the signatories, not even our own pious Republic, was genuinely willing to make this renunciation. In short, the delegates could not produce the goods they had contracted for.

III

The extent of the failure did not become obvious until the Geneva conference, six years later. The nations which sent delegates to this second meeting fully expected them to come home with an agreement for the scrapping of large numbers of warships; and it is quite possible that the delegates themselves expected as much reasonableness as at Washington. But on all sides was overlooked the fact that the real question of naval armament in a world of increasingly mechanical warfare was that of special ships to fight a specific naval war, and counter-construction by the power menaced; a question which the Washington conference had not even touched. The 1921 treaties had, indeed, savagely intensified this question by limiting the most generalized warship — the battleship — and so restricting the tonnage of other vessels as to force specialization.

Consider the state of the big navies in 1927, just before the opening of the Geneva conference, after six years of "disarmament". The United States fleet was in the Pacific, facing Japan; we had building eight heavy cruisers with eight-inch guns, ideal ships for a Pacific war, distinctly less so for any other purpose, in which their size and cruising range would be wasted; we were rapidly developing shipboard aviation, an arm which by definition is intended to operate far from the coast. Japan had just completed the largest naval program in her history — slightly heavier "replies" to the American cruisers, destroyers slightly stronger than ours, and submarines whose sea endurance was absurd unless they

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were intended to operate off California or New South Wales.

Both countries and England as well were working as fast as they could at "modernizing" battleships, a euphemism for building new ships under the names of the old, with the rules allowing everything but changes in big-gun caliber. Italy had just brought out four high-speed light cruisers, three heavies, two divisions of destroyers and three of submarines, all possessing military characteristics ideal for aggression against French or British Mediterranean communications, and practically useless for any other purpose. France had built twelve super-destroyers in reply to the Italian destroyers, six super-cruisers in reply to the Fascist five, and had concentrated in the Mediterranean everything but her new fleet of submarines, which were just what she needed to control the English Channel. Across that Channel the English had replied to the French and Italian submersibles with dozens of new destroyers and gunboats, and had on the slips eleven heavy cruisers, no match for the American and Japanese types, but just the right vessels to deal with Mussolini's fast tin-clads or the light super-destroyers of the Gauls. In other words, *nobody any longer had useless ships; everybody had conceived a possible enemy and built against that enemy a special type of ship.* Unfortunately for the Geneva conference, the ship types that would serve Italy against England or Japan against the United States would not work the other way around.

The result was that each of the conferees magnanimously offered to scrap the types most useful against it — Japan and Italy to do away with battleships and aircraft carriers; England and America, submarines; America offered to restrict cruisers as to total, but not as to individual, tonnage; Japan and England, to restrict them in individual but not total tonnage. Yet at Geneva the powers really asked no more than they had asked at Washington and showed no more obstinacy in resisting each other's demands; it was not until the complete breakdown in Switzerland that the spiritual poverty of the Washington achievement became visible.

It seems altogether likely that the delegates who took part in that melancholy debate in the Palace of the League were genuinely hurt at the attitude of the other nations. But whether they were or whether they accepted the whole proceeding with calm cynicism does not

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now matter; for the public everywhere (except in certain parts of the United States, where the failure was attributed to a pipe-dream from the mind of a Washington lobbyist, William B. Shearer) became convinced that the fair promise of the earlier agreement had been destroyed through the Machiavellianism of the other partners.

The effect was at once visible on naval appropriations. Never so soon after a major war have the powers plunged into a new armament race, never so unanimously, and never at such a pace. Italy commenced work on eight more cruisers, two squadrons of superdestroyers, and the modernization of her four battleships; France laid down twenty super-super-destroyers and six cruisers; England began twelve light cruisers and four heavies; our Congress authorized fifteen heavies; Japan, four heavies, six lights, a dozen destroyers, and a whole fleet of the new trans-pacific subs. *The total bill for the year was a little better than twice as much as the combined naval expenditures of the entire world in 1913,* which is a neat rise, even allowing for the change in the purchasing power of money, since three of the 1913 competitors (Russia, Germany, Austria) were not included. Since that date, the pace has accelerated; the total naval appropriations for the last nine years are something like four times what they were for the nine years from 1905–1914, and they continue to increase. Germany has now joined in, and it has become apparent that behind the mask of Soviet censorship, an energetic program of Russian warship construction has been going on for years.

Nor is the production of the against-one-country specialized warship the only evil result of naval "limitation" treaties. By limiting numbers of ships, they have enabled the second-class naval powers to enter the race with expensive special types, which give them a good chance of winning the mastery of the seas against the larger navies; and by making tonnage and gun-calibers the only criteria of strength in the individual ship, they have placed a premium on evading the spirit of the treaties through clever design. France's reply to the first restrictions on cruisers was the production of a submarine mounting eight-inch guns, more powerful than any light cruiser afloat, and Germany's to the similar restrictions of the Versailles instrument was the pocket-battleship, which took the blue-ribbon from all the heavy cruisers

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the world at a single bound.

Any effort to blame one nation or group of nations for this state of affairs is useless. A case can be made out against Italy for violations of even the letter of the Washington treaty, and a somewhat better case can be made out against Japan; but the spirit of the instrument died as the result of a spontaneous and universal movement — or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it never was born. If a cause behind this general movement, this complete miscarriage, is sought, it can hardly be found anywhere but in the misplaced idealism which announced the Washington treaty as the end of the armament race and thus convinced each nation of the other's bad faith when it responded to the treaty restrictions by building special types, useful against one or at most two nations. Today, even the slight hope of naval reduction that once offered has faded and we are left facing the bigger armaments, the distrust, fear, and irritation which are the natural result of the "end of the Race for Armaments" until that perfect day when the sleek new warships will be tried out against each other.

AUTUMNAL

By Eileen Hall

I like these Autumn leaves that burn to die,
Lifting their brittle scarlet to the sky;
Sap, song, wings all relinquished, Spring's desire,
And nothing left of them but death and fire.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RUSSIA'S GOLDBRICK CONSTITUTION

By William Henry Chamberlin

Dictators and their hired men will have their jokes. A familiar statement, which has been repeated over and over again in the house-organs of Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini, is that liberty in "Capitalist" countries means liberty to starve. In actual fact, of course, the only authentic cases of mass starvation in Europe in modern times have been in the Soviet Union, while the *per capita* food consumption in democratic countries is vastly higher than it is in dictatorships, whether of the Red, Black, or Brown coloration. Another amusing joke of the bright young men of the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy is to maintain, with every appearance of seriousness, that the gagged, controlled press of their own particular country constitutes "the only really free journalism in the world". But if there were a Nobel Prize for the jokes of dictators, it would certainly go to *Führer* Stalin as the author of the new Soviet Constitution. No shoddier goldbrick has been turned out in the long historical process of masking the ugly facts of despotic rule with the pleasing fictions of model, up-to-date laws and constitutions.

On paper, some of the promises of Stalin's brainchild make a brave showing. For instance, under Article 125, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed "freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of assembly and holding mass meetings; freedom of street processions and demonstrations". John Stuart Mill could have asked for nothing better. But the following paragraph suggests that there are considerable difficulties for any critical minority which endeavors to exercise such desirable privileges. It reads:

> These rights of the citizens are ensured by placing at the disposal of *the toilers and their organizations* printing presses, supplies of paper, public buildings, the streets, means of communication, and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.

Anyone who is acquainted with the uses of language in the Soviet Union will readily recognize that "the toilers and their organizations" is a euphemism for the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist Party, the Union of Communist Youth, and such Communist-controlled subsidiary organizations as the Soviet trade-unions. In the same way, it could be pointed out that Messrs. Hitler and Mussolini are not stingy when it is a question of supplying "printing presses, supplies of paper, public buildings", etc., for the promotion of Fascist propaganda and street demonstrations.

A still clearer evaluation of the "democratic liberties" promised in the Soviet Constitution was furnished by Mr. Katanyan, a high official of the Soviet Commissariat for Justice, who offered the following realistic comment:

> We have universal suffrage, enjoyed by all except the insane and people disfranchised by court ruling. The same applies to freedom of meeting. There can be no meetings of the insane or criminals, such as Monarchists, Mensheviki, and Socialist Revolutionaries.

Here one has an admirable formula for preserving a cast-iron dictatorship while promulgating the most Liberal principles in the world. You simply assume, as every dictator does, that anyone who disagrees with you is criminal, or insane, or both.

A further revelation of the status of democratic and civil liberties in the Soviet Union can best be illustrated by a few questions. Has it been possible, before or after the inauguration of the Constitution, for people to assemble and criticize Stalin as freely as Americans have criticized their Presidents, from Washington to Roosevelt II, not even excluding Lincoln during the Civil War? Has a single independent non-Communist editor been allowed to publish a newspaper or a magazine devoted to the proposition that some policies of the Soviet Government may be mistaken and open to censure? Is there a Civil Liberties Union in Russia; if so, has it ever been able to publish revelations of the innumerable arbitrary acts of the GPU or of the physical conditions in which Russia's forced-labor political prisoners (who number hundreds of thousands, by the testimony of Soviet sources) are kept? There are plenty of disgruntled proletarians in Russia; the proof of this is to be found in many reports in the Soviet press of murders and beatings of those workers who are pacemakers in the Stakhanovite speed-up in factories; what are the chances of those dissatisfied workers, under the new constitutional dispensation, to hold street demonstrations or meetings, to voice their grievances, to form unions free from Communist control, or, better

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yet, to carry out with impunity sit-down strikes in Soviet State plants? If any one of the developments suggested in these questions should ever become a reality, it would be first-page news all over the world.

Another patently fraudulent promise in the Constitution is Article 17:

> Each Union Republic reserves the right freely to secede from the USSR.

Now the right to secede is meaningless unless it also implies the right freely to advocate secession. And any Ukrainian, Georgian, Karelian, or other non-Russian who would advocate the separation of his native country from the Soviet Union would be an uncommonly poor life-insurance risk. As it happens, Communism was notably weak in the non-Russian parts of the former Czarist Empire. Ukraina, Georgia, Central Asia, Daghestan, to mention only a few of the more conspicuous examples, had to be conquered by Russian troops. The picturesque little Georgian Republic, which had a non-Bolshevik Socialist government, was overrun by Russian troops after the Soviet Government had recognized its independence and entered into treaty relations with it. All these States, if they had been left to themselves, would be under non-Communist governments today, just like the more fortunate Poland and the Baltic States, which were also attacked by the Soviet Government, but without success.

The Constitution has its full share of weasel words. It prescribes, for instance, that "in all courts of the USSR, cases are heard in public, unless otherwise provided for by law". How this works out in practice may be judged from an Associated Press item from Moscow in the New York *Times* of April 13, 1937, after the Constitution's "guaranties of civil liberty" were supposed to be in full working order:

> Workers who attempted to sabotage construction of the second link of Moscow's subway already have been "liquidated", the organ of the Commissariat for Heavy Industry disclosed today. The names and number of the alleged wreckers were not given in the account published in the newspaper, *Za Industrialisaziu*. Nor was the method of "liquidation" stated.

Much publicity has been accorded to the provisions of the new Constitution establishing secret balloting, abolishing the open voting which formerly characterized Soviet elections, and removing the former discrimination against peasants in favor of the urban population in the matter of representation in Soviet Congresses. It is interesting to note in this connection that

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neither Mussolini nor Hitler has found it necessary to resort to open voting or to unequal representation for different classes in order to maintain a thoroughly efficient system of dictatorship. One must look elsewhere for the essential bases of the Communist-Fascist system of minority rule. These bases are: a monopoly of political power for a single party, which is itself obedient to the will of a supposedly infallible leader; complete control by the existing régime in its own interests of press, schools, theater, broadcasting, and every other agency of propaganda; ruthless terrorism, directed against the faintest symptoms of organized opposition. There is not the slightest evidence to show that any of these essential bases have been undermined by the adoption of the new Soviet Constitution.

There is a good deal of ballyhoo about the "right to work" which has been written into the Soviet Constitution. There are, however, a good many far-from-pleasant places where this "right to work" exists: Sing Sing Prison, for instance, and the "Republic" of Venezuela under the sway of the late Dictator Gomez. There are no guaranties in the Constitution (and still less in actual life) against wholesale conscription of forced labor. And there has been a conspicuous and significant lack of any tendency among the unemployed in other countries to emigrate to Russia and take advantage of the "right to work" under the highly unsatisfactory conditions, as regards food and housing and sanitation, which prevail in that country.

The Soviet Constitution can best be understood as a choice morsel of propaganda for use by professional and amateur friends of Russia abroad. Soviet citizens are too well trained to make any undue use of the paper liberties which have been showered on them from on high. But the resounding phrases of the Constitution sound euphonious to persons who know nothing of Soviet political realities and who may promote one of the major Soviet political objectives: to obscure the fundamentally dictatorial character of the Stalin régime and thereby to make easier the use of democratic countries as catspaws in the war which Russia anticipates with the Fascist States.

II

The Soviet Constitution has recently found a suitable publicity agent in Anna Louise Strong. For sixteen years she has been trumpeting the supposed achievements

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and delights of life in the Soviet Union. Nothing — neither famines, nor forced labor, nor frame-up trials, nor wholesale executions of old revolutionaries, nor growing chasms of inequality between the lords and masters of the Soviet order, the high civilian and military bureaucrats, and the rank-and-file workers and peasants, nor abrupt reversals of policy and ideology — has been able to shake her childlike faith that all is for the best in her Soviet world. In her hands, Stalin's Constitution is safe against profane skepticism. She treats it with vastly more reverence than the most fossilized Conservative in America would be likely to evince in regard to the American Constitution. Not one of the many glaring discrepancies between the verbiage of the Constitution and the facts of Soviet daily life is noted in her book.[1]

To her, supreme power in the Soviet Union is vested not in Stalin and his co-opted yes-men in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party (the members of this body at the time of Lenin's death, Stalin excepted, have all been shot, driven to suicide, exiled or arrested) but in the Supreme Soviet, the new name for the unwieldy Congress of Soviets which is elected at four-year intervals. It would be hard to imagine a more naïve misstatement of the mechanics of power in Russia than the author's reference to the Supreme Soviet:

> The whole united power of the State in all its functions is combined in one body of representatives directly elected by and recallable by the people — a simple, efficient, and democratic structure of power.

As a matter of fact, the power of the Soviet State would function quite as vigorously if the Supreme Soviet were not in existence. That body is a bit of decorative window-dressing with no more actual influence on the course of foreign and domestic policy than a Hitler *Reichstag* or a Mussolini parliament. I have attended a number of Soviet Congresses in Moscow. I recall no instance when these "sovereign representatives" voiced any disapproval of any proposal which was laid before them by the government or when any important measure received less than a one-hundred-per-cent vote of ratification.

Miss Strong is intensely, not to say painfully, serious; the only glint of unconscious humor in the book is to be found in a few extraordinary bits of Pollyanna poetry, responsibility for which the author casts on the Russian peasants. Two of these couplets read as follows:

[1] *The New Soviet Constitution*, by Anna Louise Strong. *Holt:* New York.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where do we get the happy looks
You see across our land?
You never saw them under the Czar
Or on a foreign strand.

Let the balalaikas ring,
Raise anew the chorus,
Isn't it a happy thing—
The road that lies before us.

Miss Strong does her propagandist best in this book, as always. But one has a feeling that the *Zeitgeist* is against her. For the Soviet Union today is obviously caught up in one of those great waves of reaction which follow every big revolution; which gave England Charles II after Cromwell, and led France, after the poetic frenzies and wild ferocities of the Terror, first to Thermidor and then to Bonaparte. The slaughter of Trotskyists, some of whom contributed as much as Stalin himself to the original victory of the Revolution, is one symptom of the present epoch. In line with this is the increasingly conservative trend of legislation and the growing spread between the incomes of the Soviet élite and of the "common people", which makes a bitter mockery of the author's reference to "a society of worker-owners, equal in economic and political rights, equally owners of all the nation's wealth". The growth of the political power of the Red Army is something well worth watching in the future, despite the execution recently of eight of Russia's leading generals.

All this is calculated to make the most stalwart "friend of the Soviet Union" a little jittery. The slaughter of Trotskyists has emptied many pews in the church where Miss Strong and other glorifiers of the Soviet Union like to hold forth. More shocks are probably in store.

The French Revolution, like the Russian, had its fringe of worshipful admirers in other countries. But their ranks began to thin when revolutionaries as well as aristocrats and victims of false denunciation were taken on the ride to the guillotine. Some sympathizers must have fallen by the wayside when Danton's head dropped into the basket; more when Robespierre and his closest associates were put to death. And by the time Napoleon appeared on the scene, the stoutest defender of anything and everything that happened in "Revolutionary France" must have felt disposed to quit. The auguries in Russia are not dissimilar.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FALLACIES ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

By August A. Thomen

This is the second of two articles in which a physician debunks a number of myths concerning medicine and cures, which have long been held as truths in the American home.

That to scratch oneself with a rusty nail or pin is particularly dangerous.

Rust is merely an iron oxide, the result of the union of oxygen with metal. It could not possibly of itself make any wound more dangerous. Iron oxide is similar to the iron which doctors give their patients who are poor in blood. It isn't the wound which is of importance, but the germs which have been introduced into the body as a result of the wound, the most dangerous being those of tetanus.

That an intestinal tapeworm causes an excessive appetite in the patient.

This is a myth, derived from the notion that the tapeworm requires to be fed. It most certainly does, but to those familiar with the physical make-up of tapeworms it is apparent that very little sustenance is needed.

That rubber boots, rubbers, and galoshes "draw" the feet, and often cause sore eyes if worn indoors.

It is a common experience that when any one of the articles mentioned is worn for several hours, the feet are distinctly moist and sweaty. This is mainly due to the fact that normal perspiration is not permitted to evaporate rapidly. That these various articles when worn indoors cause sore eyes is a misconception.

That the drinking of medicinal waters at health springs is in itself an efficient cure for many ailments.

According to enthusiastic advocates of the "cures", they are capable of remedying a wide range of ailments, provided that care be taken in the proper selection of the special water, the waters being classified mainly as saline, alkaline, acidulous, arsenical, chalybeate (containing iron), and sulphur-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ous. Doctors now consider it a well-established fact that the drinking of these waters is of decidedly secondary importance in "taking the cure". The waters have no particular curative value except as laxatives. Such benefits as arise in some instances result chiefly from simpler diets, change of habits, the avoidance of excesses, etc.

That whisky will cure snake-bite.

K. P. Schmidt, an authority on reptiles, says: "Thorough-going experiments have shown that alcohol in small doses increases the rapidity with which snake poison is absorbed by the body, while in larger doses it very rapidly becomes an active aid to the snake poison, weakening the heart action when it most requires stimulation." The great majority of North American snakes are non-poisonous and harmless. But to most people, all snakes are poisonous. Hence, if an individual is bitten by a harmless snake, and is given whisky, his recovery is attributed to the efficacy of the latter remedy. This, the harmless kind, is the only kind of snake-bite ever to be "cured" by whisky.

That meat should be more thoroughly chewed than bread, vegetables, or fruit.

It is much more important to chew breadstuffs, vegetables, and fruits than meat. The reason lies in the fact that the digestion of breadstuffs, etc., is begun in the mouth. If they are not chewed, they will not be mixed with ptyalin and therefore will be so much dead weight in the stomach, for the stomach juices do not digest carbohydrates but only proteins. When meat (or other forms of protein) is swallowed, it is immediately attacked by the pepsin-hydrochloric acid present in the stomach, and digested in great part before it is moved on to the small intestine. Thorough chewing may aid the digestive process, but is certainly not essential.

That whole-wheat bread does not contain much starch, and hence may be eaten without harm by those who must be careful of their diets.

Why anyone should believe this particular notion is most difficult to say. Bread is bread and the difference in the carbohydrate, protein, and fat composition and the unit food value among the various kinds is so slight that it is almost negligible. White bread contains only six grains more starch per ounce than whole-wheat bread.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That fish is a brain food.

About fifty-nine per cent of the general population and about thirty-two per cent of schoolteachers believe that eating fish improves the brain. These interesting figures were obtained through a questionnaire sent out by the New Mexico State Teachers' College and distributed among parents and teachers in fourteen States. But science knows that no one food has more value, as far as the brain is concerned, than any other. Indeed, the extraordinary development of the brain in infants occurs during the time of life when the chief article of diet is milk, a food as far removed from fish as any could be.

That a high forehead is a positive sign of intelligence and culture.

Like many other fallacies, this one results from insufficient observation — associated with the misconceived notion that the larger the head the larger the brain. When, however, the matter is subjected to statistical study, it is found that there is no difference intellectually between the "highbrow" and the "lowbrow". Such is the conclusion of Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, anthropologist of the Smithsonian Institution. In both the absolute height of the forehead, between the nasal depression and the hair line, and in the forehead's height compared with the total height, Dr. Hrdlicka found that "the old Americans — at large certainly one of the best stocks in every way — stand not at or even near the head, but at the foot of four groups", which include the American Indian, the American Negro, and the Alaskan Eskimo. The Eskimo was shown to have the highest forehead of the four groups in relation to total height. Obviously, whether one is a "highbrow" or a "lowbrow" is not important.

That a receding chin is a sign of weak character.

There is no truth in this notion. In man, the receding or protruding jaw has no definite significance. If one's acquaintance is sufficiently wide, he will readily be able to recall individuals with receding chins who possess as much character and courage as any average person. On the other hand, who does not know of individuals with decidedly protruding jaws whose real character and courage belie the supposed significance of the facial appearance? The fallacy of the receding jaw is only another form of the misconceived notion concerning the supposed ease with

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which we can tell a person's intelligence from his facial expression.

That only weak-minded people can be hypnotized, and that the hypnotist uses great powers of will.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing mysterious about hypnotism. It is merely a form of artificial sleep. Anyone can hypnotize if he takes the trouble to learn a few simple principles. And anyone can be hypnotized provided he knows how to co-operate with the operator, and knows how to concentrate on one or a limited number of ideas.

That we have only five senses.

The fact is that we have a number of other senses in addition to the five that are so well known. Their existence is readily demonstrated. Take for example the *muscular sense:* suppose you place your hand upon an alarm clock standing on the table. You hear it ticking, you see it, and you feel it. You are thus able to gain certain information regarding it — its size and shape, etc. You feel that it is made of glass and metal and that it is cold. While grasping it, raise it from the table. You learn that it has weight. Now it is not the sense of touch which gives you this added information, for you were touching the clock in the same manner while it was on the table. It is the sensation of resistance derived from your *muscular sense* which produces this knowledge.

Physiologists speak of the *temperature sense,* as different from that of touch; likewise of the *pain sense* and the *articular sense,* that is, the consciousness attendant upon the articulation of the joints. There is also the *distance sense* — the power of estimating distance without sight or direct physical contact; and the *static sense,* by which the equilibrium and orienting of the body in space are secured, and which resides in the semi-circular canals of the inner ear. Thus we see that instead of having merely five senses, we actually possess eleven.

That there is such a thing as "second sight".

One often hears of elderly persons whose eyesight has apparently improved so much in old age that they are able to dispense with eyeglasses, which they have worn for many decades. These persons are said to have obtained their second sight. But there is no such thing. This alleged phenomenon occurs in some degree in all persons naturally nearsighted. A nearsighted

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

person is one whose eyeball is too long, thus causing the image to fall in front of the retina. This defect is corrected by placing a concave lens before the eye, which causes the image to be moved back onto the retina. After the age of forty a small, very important muscle in the eye, which controls the shape of the lens, begins to weaken. This occurs in every person, and is a normal aging process. The effect of this weakening is to cause the image to move backwards. As this process continues, a weaker and weaker lens is required to correct nearsightedness, until because of the change in the eye lens, the image is moved back far enough to reach the retina, without the aid of glasses.

That some persons actually have double joints.

The "double-jointed" individuals, as certain acrobats and contortionists are called, are merely persons who have permanently stretched the ligaments which hold together the ends of bones forming the various joints. This stretching results from the repeated contortions usually practiced from early childhood, and naturally gives these persons much greater freedom of motion than is had by the average individual.

That men who are very hairy are possessed of great physical strength.

Any physician can testify to the incorrectness of this age-old notion. Some of the hairiest persons are often found to be among the constitutionally weakest; and the devotee of the prize and wrestling rings knows that great physical strength is in no sense associated with hairiness. In none of the numerous accounts of gigantic strong men, of both ancient and modern times, is any mention made of unusual hairiness.

That when a person falls from a great height he loses consciousness or is dead before striking the ground.

There is no truth in the notion. The experience of numerous parachute jumpers should offer a final settlement of this question. It is a common practice for them to fall many thousands of feet, before opening their parachutes.

That a drowning person rises to the surface three times before finally sinking.

All too often the drowning person sinks at once. On the other hand, drowning people often come to the surface two, three, and more times. The specific gravity of the human body is slightly greater

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than water, hence its natural tendency is to sink. The drowning person, however, struggles to reach the surface. In doing so he draws water into the windpipe, which causes him to cough, thereby expelling water. But on the next submergence more water is taken into the nose and mouth, which may be swallowed or drawn into the lungs. The body at first tends to rise to the surface because of the air in the lungs and as a result of the movement of the limbs. Soon it is again submerged. When insensibility arrives, death occurs quickly and placidly from suffocation.

That powdered glass can cause death when mixed with food, and that it can be used as a "poison" unknown to the victim.

It has been proved by recent experiments made under the direction of the U. S. Department of Agriculture that glass, whether coarsely or finely powdered, has no ill effects upon rats. Rats were fed for some time on food mixed with glass and they did not seem to be injured. And when they were killed and examined, their alimentary canals were found to be in normal condition. The belief in powdered glass as a poison may therefore be safely relegated to the list of popular fallacies.

That at the moment of death, especially when it occurs suddenly, the important events of a person's life are speedily recalled.

There can be, of course, no experimental evidence on the subject. The writer has interviewed a number of persons who at one time or another had escaped sudden death and in not a single instance was there the slightest verification of the notion. In several instances the individuals concerned were so overwhelmed by the impending calamity that their minds ceased to function; in the majority of cases, however, their only thoughts concerned measures that might lead to safety.

That if a woman who is to become a mother is frightened, her child will probably bear a birthmark which may show some resemblance to the cause of the fright.

There can be little doubt that the persistence of this fallacy among the educated is in some measure due to its employment as a theme for many novels. But it is now definitely established that there is not the slightest truth in this ancient and unfortunate superstition, for science knows with certainty that there is no nervous connection between the mother and the unborn child. The numerous

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stories which one hears are mere coincidences, embellished with imaginative details. No single case has ever withstood scientific scrutiny.

That the retina of a murdered person's eye records the image of the murderer.

This fallacy is propagated chiefly by writers of sensational fiction. Some years ago the officials of Scotland Yard made experiments with definitely negative results. If the anatomical structure of the retina be considered, it is difficult to see how such a phenomenon could occur.

That the human eye has the power to over-awe animals.

The human eye has no such power whatever. This is abundantly attested by those who have been attacked by animals, and by the attendants at zoological gardens and circuses.

That if a person touches a toad or a frog he will get warts.

The origin of this interesting fallacy is hard to fix. The typical toad has numerous wart-like elevations on its skin. The conclusion was no doubt reached centuries ago that because of these prominences, touching or handling a toad must be one way of getting warts. But frogs and toads have nothing to do with the causation of warts.

That cats sometimes suck the breath of sleeping babies.

This commonly-held belief exists mainly in rural sections. But it has no foundation in fact, for the anatomical formation of a cat's mouth makes it impossible for it to prevent respiration by the mouth and nose of a baby at the same time. That a cat has sometimes caused the death of a baby in its sleep is well known, but the explanation does not involve any malice on the part of the cat. A cat as a rule seeks a soft place for slumber. It may find such in a child's crib or carriage, and may accidentally lie directly on the baby's head.

That mad dogs foam at the mouth, and that they are always excited.

Actually, the dogs whose bites are to be dreaded the most, neither foam at the mouth nor do they rush about in an excited manner. It is in the last stages of the disease, when the dog is so paralyzed that it can hardly stand, that considerable quantities of ropy saliva hang from the mouth. The bite of a dog suffering from rabies may be most dangerous when its disposition is actually amiable.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOW THE WPA BUYS VOTES

By Gordon Carroll

Last month, The Mercury *published the first of three articles concerning the New Deal's vast propaganda machine and the methods it employs to further the personal political ambitions of Franklin D. Roosevelt. This second article presents specific details of how the machine operates through the medium of various bureaucratic organizations as set up by the Democratic Party, in Congress assembled.*

Of all the Good-Life-for-America agencies, none is better known — in a propaganda sense — than the Works Progress Administration. Owned and operated by the egregious Harry Hopkins, its philosophy, its technique, its agents, and its easy money have penetrated into every corner of the Union, under the protection of Dr. Roosevelt's house flag. Primarily, the success of the WPA in thus enfolding the country's voters to its paternalistic bosom has been due to the publicity efforts of its field representatives, disguised as work of an "informational and educational" nature. Directed by the master propagandists in Washington, these field operatives may be classified in two divisions: (a) the Information Directors in each of the forty-eight States; and (b) under their control, the directors of the Federal Writers' Projects in each of the forty-eight States. This field force, by the nature of its structure, must support a general staff, captains, lieutenants, and privates; but the essential task of all these Treasury-subsidized jobholders is precisely the same: namely, to perpetuate the New Deal and its *Führer*. Nowhere, not even in today's Russia, Germany, or Italy, is there a publicity machine of greater potentialities.

Oddly enough, this far-flung organization publicizes everything except its own operations. But such modesty is a matter of censorship rather than of ethics. Investigators find it impossible to obtain complete data on WPA propaganda

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

activities because of an order signed by Mr. Hopkins, forbidding any employee, either in Washington or in the field, from revealing such information. The technical set-up of the Works Administration field offices, however, is obtainable from public records.

The WPA administrator in each State enjoys the services of an Information Service director, whose job is to glorify all local projects and transmit publicity material of regional or national import to Washington, where it may be cleared through headquarters. In the majority of cases, these regional missionaries of the More Abundant Life are former newspapermen, and as such, they distribute press handouts, magazine articles, radio scripts, photographs, and (upon authorization from Washington) newsreels. To aid them in this "educational and informational" crusade, Mr. Hopkins has placed at their disposal the professional services of the State directors of the Federal Writers' Projects—erudite individuals who function as city editors on a large scale, bulwarked by staffs ranging from a few industrious leg-men to more than one hundred. Naturally, many of the staff men are former journalists, and to them is assigned the duty of answering attacks on WPA and developing favorable public sentiment through news stories, feature articles, and the like. These white-collar press agents originally were hired to prepare the remarkable, many-volumed *American Guide,* sometimes known as the American *Baedeker;* but when any Works Progress activity comes under fire, the travel-book experts drop their researches into rural folklore and turn to answering the critics, relaying such defensive propaganda through their State offices to Washington. As the Writers' Projects are so organized as to cover every section of every State, the field workers are within reach of all projects, no matter how small, insignificant, or isolated. The result of such mass-coverage upon the political fortunes of Dr. Roosevelt can easily be comprehended.

The routine task of the press agents is to prepare stories on particular projects, accompanied by cheery statements from New Deal politicos, as well as explanations of how WPA cash will bring the Good Life to a specified regional area. The stories also are likely to contain favorable comments from influential local citizens, which, when relayed to Washington, provide heavy ammunition for Roosevelt senators and congressmen in

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

answering Opposition critics. In fact, much of this propaganda, carried under a Washington dateline, has found its way back to the State where projects are under fire, and has been printed by forward-looking journals favorable to the Roosevelt Administration.

The organization of the Federal Writers' Project in Maryland, one of the smaller Commonwealths, is representative of conditions in other sections of the country. There are fifty-two employees, housed in government-rented suites in the new Enoch Pratt Library building, Baltimore, whose supposed goal is the preparation of the *Maryland Guide*. The payroll for the office is $50,400 annually, considerably less than the figure last Winter before thirty employees were dropped. To date, the Maryland program has cost the tidy sum of $85,000; and no one knows how much more Treasury cash will be tossed around before the project winds up its promotional work for the Complete Life. The assistant to the State director is a newspaperman. Twelve of the office workers, or approximately twenty-five per cent of the staff, are classified as former "proofreaders, copyreaders, reviewers, editorial and sports writers". In this sense, they stand ready at all times to inform the public just how Dr. Roosevelt proposes to bring endless leisure to the Maryland proletariat, through the medium of Mr. Hopkins' spending-to-save policy.

As to the political value of such State units, a brief glance at the Washington record is revealing. Last year, for instance, Senator Hastings of Delaware loosed a barrage against the WPA from the floor of the Senate. Being a Republican, he was naturally suspect as a Tool of the Interests, if not as an incendiary direct from Wall Street. Nevertheless, the Senator delivered some forthright blows: he mentioned specifically the famous super-dog-pound project in Nashville and the equally famous rat-extermination project in the purlieus of Cleveland, both of which monumental undertakings were being financed by the unsuspecting American taxpayer. Such gaudy WPA projects, remarked Mr. Hastings, were tantamount to boondoggles raised to the *n*th power. At the time, there was a pained silence from the side of the chamber where the professional New Deal apologists foregather. They were, however, merely marking time. Senator Hastings' attack was the signal for action on the part of the propaganda machine estab-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lished by Mr. Hopkins, using the Writers' Projects as a medium.

Orders were relayed from Washington through the State supervisors to the district chiefs of the Writers' Projects in Nashville and in Cleveland. They were told to prepare data to be used in answering Senator Hastings' blast. With their academic knowledge of WPA work in their communities and their wide acquaintance among officials, voters, and others, the Project leg-men were able to gather fancy statements concerning the two criticized projects. The result was that within a few days, Senator McKellar of Tennessee took the floor of the Senate to offer a typical Roosevelt rebuttal of Mr. Hastings' attack. He had in hand statements from the mayor of Nashville and health officials that the dog pound was necessary as a means of protecting children from rabies; that the streamlined building was constructed to replace an unsightly structure; and that its cost of $15,000 was not excessive. From Cleveland he had procured a statement that the rat-extermination crusade was purely a health measure; that it was aimed to combat rats, known to be carriers of disease; and that it represented a potential saving to the city of about $197,000 a year. This latter figure was reached as follows: federal health authorities estimate that a rat will perpetrate two dollars' worth of damage of all kinds in a year; and 100,000 dead carcasses had been found and destroyed in Ohio's famous industrial community. Of this potential saving of $200,000, the cost to be deducted was only $3000. Mr. McKellar indicated that this was pretty efficient work on the part of WPA. And it was — on the part of the press agents who gathered the rebuttal material for him.

At another time, when the so-called Federal "Cultural Projects" — art, music, theater, and writing — were under fire on the Washington front and the news was being noised about that maybe the *Führer* would ask Congress to curb their remarkable non-cultural activities, an appeal was sent out by the WPA to procure fervent expressions from leading citizens, politicians, clergymen, educators, artists, and Communists in every city where the Projects were operating, urging the continuance of such efforts to bring the Good Life to America. Within a few days of this impassioned plea to WPA regional offices, the hard-working legislators in Washington were recipients of telephone calls, telegrams, personal visits, and letters from every section of the country.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus did the Roosevelt propaganda machine validate its existence.

Just what percentage of the volume of such sectional propaganda is put to practical use — on a day-to-day basis — is a debatable question, for the figures are highly "confidential". But the fact remains that the WPA is supplied — at the taxpayers' expense — with the greatest torrent of usable publicity ever obtained by any governmental agency, in this country or abroad.

The salaries of the Information Directors who handle this publicity traffic are variable; no two States reveal similar figures. For example, the director in California was recently listed as receiving $1920 per annum, as compared to $5000 paid in Ohio. The director in Massachusetts was put down at $3600, and his assistant, $2600. Michigan requires three propaganda wizards at a total cost of $7200, while New Hampshire, a stronghold of Black Republicanism, finds it impossible to publicize Dr. Roosevelt adequately without five men, whose combined pay-checks total $8160. So far as the WPA admits, Illinois is getting along with only one director at $2400, Connecticut also has one at $2000, New Jersey has one at $1320. New York State, however, being a populous voting area, requires five master-minds at a combined figure of $11,720. Pennsylvania has two at $6200, Tennessee has one at $2100, Texas one at $1800. In West Virginia, the WPA division of information and publication supports twelve employees, on the phenomenally light budget of $12,300. The collection of such data relating to personnel and salaries is highly difficult, not only because of the general secrecy surrounding Dr. Roosevelt's publicity program, but because State operatives are paid out of State budgets of federal money, thus keeping the record doubly obscure.

In their efforts to earn their crisp Treasury checks, the field directors are constantly engaged in mapping new and grandiose schemes for the dissemination of Good Life gospel. One of the more refined techniques in WPA propaganda is the process by which State administrators wangle favorable comments from civic and political leaders. These joyful blurbs are gathered by means of questionnaires, framed by the WPA and broadcast to various notables. The questionnaires follow this general form:

1. Do you consider work a proper method of settling the unemployment problem as compared with the dole and idleness?

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. Is the work being done under WPA useful and needed?
3. Is there useful work yet to be done under a continued WPA program in your community or county?
4. Could you suggest projects that you desire under a continued WPA program?

It will be seen that the answering of this quiz places a heavy responsibility upon anyone who has ever cast a vote, or has prevailed upon his fellow-man to do likewise. That is, the questionnaire puts politicians on the spot. Their favorable replies are collected in mimeographed or multigraphed books, bearing an explanatory preface, and the volumes are then distributed to newspapers, public officials, and leading citizens. Hence, the questionnaires not only identify persons as favoring Dr. Roosevelt's free-cash-and-handout system, but also make it difficult for the New Deal projects to be repudiated at a later date on political grounds.

The propelling machinery for this nation-wide WPA propaganda mill is located in Washington. Of the home-office units which thus operate in the District of Columbia, none perhaps is more interesting to the student of Rooseveltian publicity than the WPA's self-styled "Information Bureau", where a high-pressure staff of editors, readers, writers, and assorted jobholders is furiously engaged in one of the most comprehensive ballyhoo campaigns in history. Naturally, the Bureau is sub-divided into those various cells without which a first-rate, growing bureaucracy cannot function. An examination of one office, the Special Reports Division, gives an indication of the general organizational technique. Here, a "special assistant" (Roosevelt euphemism for publicity agent) presides as a sort of managing editor, keeping a schedule of assignments of stories to various Good-Life writers, the status of each story, and a list of demands for ghost-written speeches from New Deal magnificoes, including every brand of oratory from soothing fireside chats to outright bids for votes. When a particular script is completed, it is up to the talents of the special assistant to place it in publicity channels where it will do the most good. Stories are classified for adaptation to daily newspaper-feature pages, Sunday supplements, health magazines, welfare publications, Sunday rotogravure sections, and educational, agricultural, and technical periodicals. An analysis of the Division's schedule for one period last year reveals the following propaganda articles in preparation:

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARTICLES OUTSTANDING

Farm Pest Eradication (crickets, cattle tick, etc.).
Removal of Eye Sores.
McDowell feature story. (Ephraim McDowell House, Danville, Ky. Historical building restoration).
Air Pollution.
War vs. Works Program — Baker Speech.
School Lunches.
Privy Construction — Public Health.
Special Health Program ("Medical Care and WPA").
Condensing Questions and Answers of WPA Work (Additional Questions).
Oyster Seeding — Anti-Star Fish (Added Material).
Maritime Safety.
Fisheries Project.
Archaeological Projects (Added material; rewrite).
Individual Case Histories — Human Interest Stories of Individual Rehabilitation.
Basic Speech for Women of WPA.
Quantitative Statements of Works Projects — Paragraphs Introductory to Statistical Data.
Juvenile Delinquency Story ("We Pay the Fiddler"). (Added Data).
Diets on School Lunches.
Salvaging the White-Collar Worker.
State Insane Asylums — Improvements and Service to.
Federal Recreation Projects and Their Effects on Juvenile Delinquency.
Household Aids.
"Stitch in Time Saves Nine" — An article on repainting, etc., of existing construction to prolong life. The idea is to show that repair work is of as much permanent value to the community as new construction projects.
Sewage Disposal.
Eradication of Traffic Hazards (General road and bridge construction, traffic survey, hump eradication).
Public Beaches, Swimming and Wading Pools — Recreation Service and construction of.
Zoological Park Projects — Animal studies and natural landscaping (Recreational).
Children's Dental Clinics — Rural and Urban.
Rural Clinics and Nurse Visitation.
Use of Salvage Material — Toledo Zoo.
Review of Unemployment Statistics for the *Christian Century*.
Tax Surveys — Revealing delinquency and overlooked tax assessments.
Household Aid Training.
Speech to be delivered before the Young Negro Democratic Club.
Building Better Babies — Article for *Parents' Magazine* on some phases of work of Women's Division.
Nursery Education — How it is benefiting Negro children, mothers, and teachers.
Music Project — Negro units in Federal Music Project.
Selected Paragraphs from Authoritative Sources, illustrative of WPA.
Movie Scenario.
Article on Question of Handing Back Control of Relief to States.
Consumer Study Project — In co-operation with Bureau of Household Economics and Bureau of Labor Statistics.
Farmers' Market Construction — Article on projects in co-operation with Agricultural Extension Service.
"Are They Rejecting Jobs?" — Article on the various studies made of those on Relief rolls refusing work in private employment.
Small Town Trade Expansion Due to Farm-to-Market Roads — Sample story.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Collecting Photographs for Photo News Service. (Writing Captions).
Collecting Material on Recreational Program in Michigan.
Re-employment and the White-Collar Worker.
Speech for New York State Democratic Organization.

Now it may be argued, by advocates of the Good Life, that work such as that enumerated above is distinctly of an "informational and educational" nature. No doubt it is. But a close reading of the topics will indicate that the bulk of the educational broadside is aimed at emphasizing how the downtrodden American can be rehabilitated and re-financed *by the Roosevelt Administration*. Throughout such literature also runs a note of class-consciousness, of collectivism, of anti-capitalism — all of which is foreign to the tenets of democracy. Even the most obtuse of Dr. Roosevelt's underprivileged voters will not fail to absorb some of this thinly-disguised propaganda, just as the inhabitants of certain European countries have absorbed similar propaganda from their dictatorial lords and masters. Hence, the question here is not so much whether New Deal publicity is "educational and informational", but rather with what ulterior purpose it "educates and informs". Indubitably, the indoctrination now being carried on by agents of the Works Progress Administration is solely for the purpose of bringing into power in this country a collectivist régime under the perpetual domination of Dr. Roosevelt's personal political party.

II

Having examined certain policies of the WPA headquarters in Washington and the manner in which they are promulgated throughout the country, it is pertinent now to turn to the vociferous field agencies which have been created to push the so-called WPA Education Program. A few months ago, an estimate on the progress of this civic crusade was made by Mr. Hopkins for the benefit of the House Appropriations Committee. The figures were highly encouraging — from the Rooseveltian point of view — for Mr. Hopkins disclosed that during the past three years, more than 700,000 men and women (all of voting age) had been taught how to read newspapers and write letters. In March of this year, nearly 250,000 persons were enrolled in WPA literacy classes, and more than 6000 teachers were drawing pay-checks for their professional services. This record, so to speak, appears to confound

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

critics of the WPA: that is, no right-thinking citizen should challenge such a noble effort in the field of worthwhile sociology. But oddly enough, the WPA's educational program covers a number of topics which do not rightly belong in any campaign against illiteracy. As the New York *Times* puts it, the crusade "goes far beyond fundamentals", resulting, in many instances, in a blatant emphasis on the principles of collectivism.

Among the various propaganda agencies in this nation-wide literacy campaign is the Workers' Education Division, which is held in high esteem as a medium by which to indoctrinate proletarian voters with the dogma of the Roosevelt Abundant Life, as well as to explain to the Downtrodden Worker just how New Deal legislation will double his wages. In this connection, "How to Organize Labor Locals" is one of the most popular subjects in the curriculum. During the past three years, the Division has enrolled some 60,000 educational students under the direction of Hilda Smith, the director of Workers' Education and a co-founder of the "I Am Not a Communist, But —" Club. State WPA officials, energized by her Left-wing philosophy, conduct "schools" and open-forum sessions for workers in every State of the Union. In Michigan, for example, the Education project co-operates joyously with the United Auto Workers union, the spearpoint of John L. Lewis' attack on the motor industry. Each month, $1000 in federal funds is expended in the Detroit area to teach Uncle Sam's underprivileged how to Beat the Bosses — with a lead pipe if necessary. The UAW organizes "The Workers" and their wives into classes for the WPA teachers to instruct in the art of Revolution. Merlin D. Bishop, a leader of the Radical shock-troops in Michigan, is particularly active in such organizational work; at the same time — another New Deal "coincidence"? — his wife, Dorothy Hubbard, is the director of WPA teachers. Eight hundred proletarians, mostly employed in the motor factories, attend classes each week, and are told how they can do their bit in the fight to destroy Capitalism.

The most intensive propaganda of the Adult Education program is naturally distributed in urban centers, where the most voters can be reached with the minimum effort. Thousands of citizens in every large American city have received their baptism of Roosevelt collectivism during the past four years; thousands more are slated to get

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attention between now and November, 1940. As an example of the manner in which this work is carried on, and of the plausible guise in which it is offered to the public, THE MERCURY reprints in part a letter distributed by the WPA in Manhattan on June 10 of this year:

WPA Adult Education Program of the Board of Education, City of New York

During the past two years, the Works Progress Administration, through the Board of Education, has been sponsoring a city-wide movement of public forums. . . . Our Speakers' Bureau, servicing about 140 forums monthly, is called upon to provide volunteer speakers in practically every field of public interest. . . .

Development of the Forum Movement in New York City to Date

Number of Meetings	2252
Number of Speakers	2098
Attendance	201,070
Personnel	87
Number of Centers Served	343

Speakers:

A. A. Berle, Jr.	Clarence Hathaway
Stephen Vincent Benét	Sidney Hillman
Dr. Hansu Chan	Elon Huntington Hooker
Frederic Coudert, Jr.	James G. MacDonald
Henry Pratt Fairchild	T. S. Miyakawa
Robert H. Jackson	Walter Pach
Messmore Kendall	James C. Rorty
William H. Kilpatrick	Dr. Kurt Rosenfel
Emil Lengyel	Rose Schneidermann
Eduard C. Lindeman	Benjamin Stolberg
James W. Gerard	Norman Thomas
Hayim Greenberg	Ira Wile
Matthew Woll	

This official letter from WPA headquarters in New York City contains one item of more than ordinary importance: the sample list of speakers available for the preachment of New Deal dogma includes the names of eight leading Socialists and Communists, as well as a baker's dozen of professional "Liberals", whose fervor for Russian collectivism is only equaled by their denunciations of American "Fascism".

This same note of Radical propaganda, intermingled with Dr. Roosevelt's personal publicity, is discernible in many other divisions of WPA work, particularly in the so-called Federal Arts Projects, which include Theater, Arts, Music, and Writing. Thousands of words have been written in the past three years about the manner in which the Comrades have taken over these projects as open or covert mediums of Soviet dogma; an equal amount of wordage has been ground out by the Project workers themselves in defense of their "artistic" activities. The tenor of this defense is that the Left-wingers, while numerous on the payroll, are not in control; and that an analysis of their creations, particularly in the theater field, will reveal that the bulk of their time is actually spent in whooping up American democracy. But this defense is as specious as the jobholders who write it. In the case of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Theater Project, under the leadership of Mrs. Hallie Flanagan, a superficial glance at the record will indicate that scores of plays of a non-political nature are being presented daily to the gullible American masses: but what the uninformed person fails to comprehend is that the real efforts, the real talents, and the real propaganda of the Theater Projects are concentrated only on those opuses which are distinctly Communist in flavor. The non-political efforts of Mrs. Flanagan's Left-wing wards constitute mere window-dressing to confound unwary critics.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the far-flung activities of the Theater Project. Two excerpts from the public prints are sufficient to disclose the actual political objectives of the ham actors and hack playwrights who now clutter the Flanagan payroll. The first is taken from the New York *Times* of last May, and comprises a dramatic criticism written by Mr. Brooks Atkinson:

> Believing that plays for children should have a moral significance, the Federal Theater has conscientiously produced a revolutionary bedtime story, *The Revolt of the Beavers*, which was acted at the Adelphi yesterday afternoon. In the form of Mother Goose fantasy, it is a primer lesson in the class struggle, written by Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz, with an ideological score by Oscar Waltzer. To the kiddies of New York, the battle of the laboring classes against the sleek and obese chieftains of property may be a little too remote; unformed minds accustomed to innocent play in the streets may not grasp the Marxian dialectic. But the colorful little fable which the WPA has produced for their entertainment and education portrays the struggle playfully in terms of oppressed beavers. "Beavers of the world, unite!" is the unspoken sense of the drama. By uniting and shooting down the chief's company police with revolvers and machine guns concealed in their lunch boxes, the hungry beavers joyfully overthrow their industrial oppressors. The newest adventure of the WPA theater ought to improve our diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. . . .
>
> This first lesson in labor warfare is staged against some whimsical settings and in imaginative costumes designed by Samuel Leve and to an abstract score of music played by a WPA orchestra. It is acted with any number of capricious capers by a competent cast of child entertainers. The style is playful; the mood is gravely gay and simple-minded. Many children now unschooled in the technique of revolution now have an opportunity, at government expense, to improve their tender minds. Mother Goose is no longer a rhymed escapist. She has been studying Marx; Jack and Jill lead the Class Revolution.

The second excerpt is taken from a Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, dispatch to the New York *Herald Tribune* of last July:

> A troupe of seventeen Works Progress Administration actors from New York, their expenses paid by John L.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lewis' Committee for Industrial Organization, presented at a picnic of steel workers here this afternoon a performance of *The Cradle Will Rock*, Marc Blitstein's opera in which citizens of "Steel Town, U. S. A.", are urged to form a united front for a closed shop. John G. Ramsay, president of the Star of Bethlehem Lodge, No. 1409, of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, said that the union presented the show in the hope of educating potential members. . . .

The pro-union thesis of the piece found a sympathetic audience in the CIO officials, who, after the show, said that Will Geer's portrayal of the character, Mister Mister, dominant factor in the government of "Steel Town, U. S. A.", "reminded" them of Eugene G. Grace, president of the Bethlehem Steel Company.

The performance came in the midst of the SWOC effort to have the National Labor Relations Board here order a poll of workers in the Bethlehem plant.

Enough, then, has been shown of various WPA educational and cultural activities to indicate that collectivist propaganda is a major objective of Harry Hopkins' crusading legions. But the picture is still not complete; skeptics will insist that this magazine has based its attack on partisanship. Therefore, as a *pièce de résistance,* THE MERCURY presents the following excerpts from a manual of propaganda technique of the Works Progress Administration, as prepared last year by one of Mr. Hopkins' high-ranking executives. This historic State paper, marked "Confidential", was prepared for the use of Information Directors throughout the country, as a bible for them in their feverish efforts to ensure the political future of the Democratic Party. It establishes, beyond dispute, the thesis that Dr. Roosevelt is the world's No. 1 propagandist, and bulwarks the contention of this magazine that the New Deal publicity trust overlooks no opportunities of selling America on the Fuller and More Complete Life.

"CONFIDENTIAL"

The activities of the Works Progress Administration are public business and the general public is entitled to adequate and accurate information concerning the entire progress. . . . The need is to report on this work through all such modern avenues of presentation as will make it more clearly and readily understandable to everyone. It is proposed that motion pictures, charts, models, and other forms of visual representation shall be employed as well as the printed and spoken word (newspapers, radio, and other similar media) in giving to the people the full and complete story of WPA. . . .

Each State Administrator is directed to survey his facilities for the distribution of information in the light of the above, and to supplement such

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

facilities sufficiently to provide an adequate information service. . . . The Washington office will lay down basic policies, indicate a minimum of procedure, and offer a number of suggestions, which may be used at the discretion of State Administrators. . . .

I. Graphic Information

A. *Camera Records*

1. Still Photography

The camera should be utilized as one of the most helpful aids in the work of the Information Service. . . . The old Chinese saying, "A picture is worth 10,000 words", is very applicable here. Therefore, a photographic unit is essential to each State Information Service. Photographs in quantities are needed for records of progress on projects, to accompany reports to Washington, and for other information purposes. . . .

2. Moving Pictures

All arrangements for moving pictures shall be cleared through this office.

B. *Project Visitation*

Nothing in the whole field of information — newspaper, stories, photographs, exhibits, moving pictures — is as convincing, or will be remembered as long, as actually seeing the project. It is therefore one of the most important responsibilities of the Information Service to encourage personal inspection, by the citizenship, of projects, whether in operation or completed.

One effective method of bringing this about is to have a dedication ceremony when an important project is begun, and a completion ceremony when it is finished. This has the added advantage of enabling those who attend to visualize the "before and after" viewpoint of the community benefits arising from the employment of large numbers of destitute people, and from the carrying out of the project. High administrative officials should attend all such ceremonies and take part in them. Also, one of the workers, as their representative, should be on the program. . . .

1. Workers and their families

Employees on projects have a personal interest in the progress and success of WPA operations. They should be informed not only about their project but about other projects in their community and State. This may be accomplished by bulletins to workers, verbal explanations by administrative officials, project supervisors and foremen, and other suitable means. . . . The

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aim of all this should be to give the workers a fuller understanding of the *principles* which underlie the Works Program. . . . Every opportunity should be taken to impress on the workers and on all other citizens, the fact that under the Works Program the primary responsibility for the initiation of all projects rests with *the sponsor* — that the WPA is in general only a mechanism for supplying to a community the public work *which was selected by its own responsible officials.* . . .

2. The public

A plan of operation for this has been well worked out by L. E. Harwood of the Texas WPA Information Service. Following is a letter he sent to all Texas District Directors:

"Now that the Texas quota of 120,000 workers is employed on WPA projects, and the program is at peak operation, district directors should take steps to acquaint the public with the work we are doing.

"In this connection, may we earnestly commend to your attention the suggestion of J. P. Henderson, director of the El Paso district, who says:

> . . . I am going to invite a committee from the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Committee of One Hundred, Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioners, and City Aldermen (to visit with me the outstanding projects here), because I think, in justice to themselves, they should have someone of their number see just what is being done in their district. . . .'

"If you should decide to sponsor such a visit, the following suggestions are offered for planning the tour:

"1. Try it in your home town (the city in which the district office is located) first. Note the reaction. If it works well there, similar visits may be made in other principal communities of the district.

"2. Suggest to officials of each club that they designate committees . . . to go on the inspection tour, with the understanding that the committee report what they saw as a part of the club's next weekly meeting.

"3. Don't wear the guests out by trying to visit too many projects. Three or four projects, each illustrating a phase of the program, should be ample. . . .

"4. Assemble complete information of projects to be visited beforehand and have a spokesman explain salient features of the projects as they are inspected. . . .

"5. The visiting group should by all means include representatives from the leading women's clubs. For their information, a woman's project, such as a sewing room, should be on the list of projects visited.

"6. Suggest to one of the leading club members that he tell the local news-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paper about the proposed visit, so that a reporter and photographer may accompany the party."

District Directors can vary this plan, and keep it still more informal, by merely calling up three or four influential citizens and saying to them in effect: "I want to show you something. Come out and run around to some of our projects this afternoon."

If this process were repeated once a week for four or five weeks or longer, a number of men whose words have weight in the community would *know* the value of the Works Program for the first time since it began. Publishers, editors, and reporters should be included — *but only one in each car,* so that they may hear what the others say. . . .

On all project visits, the fact that local government officials initiated the projects should be brought out, *so that due credit may be given them* for their share in providing employment for destitute employables and in producing useful public works. In Delaware, newspaper opposition to the Program melted away after newspaper editors and reporters were taken on such tours. . . .

C. *Archives Material*

1. Posters

The techniques of poster treatment are well known but only the surface possibilities of this method have been explored so far in the Works Program. . . . In most Art Projects, or in Writers' or Recreation projects, someone who has had experience in poster design can be found.

2. Exhibits

Both fixed and traveling exhibits are useful and one may easily be converted into the other. . . . The most widely-used element is photographs in various sizes from 8 x 10 up to blow-ups as large as life size. The standard size for department-store window display blow-ups is 28 x 44 inches. Other elements include animated maps and posters, charts, maps, miniatures, sketches, paintings, cartoons, pamphlets, and articles produced on projects (dresses for Relief children made in sewing projects, products of Relief gardens). . . .

Exhibits in such places as Home Complete Expositions, road shows and automobile shows (especially for farm-to-market road-building exhibits), theater lobbies, bank lobbies, hotel lobbies, county fairs and State fairs, will be seen by more people than in municipal buildings, post offices, or State Houses. In small towns and villages the post-office lobby is the best place. . . .

Every exhibit item which is not fully self-explanatory must be accompanied by an attractively designed placard, with *all* lettering large enough

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be read easily at a distance of ten to twelve feet, identifying the project and explaining its benefits. In the text of each placard somewhere should be the words "WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION" (*Not* WPA) in letters large enough to dominate the placard.

3. Cartoons

When a *good* cartoonist can be found, in the administrative staff or elsewhere, his services should be utilized in making cartoons for intra-departmental and similar publications, for exhibits, and for reproduction in mat form for newspapers. . . .

4. Maps

Maps are most useful (a) when they visualize in graphic form a particular public improvement, perhaps linking it up with other public improvements of the same character in progress in the community; (b) when they visualize a particular project as part of a long-time program of public improvements of one kind in a community (flood control, boulevards); and (c) when they visualize the entire WPA program in a city, county, or State. They should be used as frequently and in as many media as possible — newspapers, periodicals, WPA house organs, exhibits.

5. Slides

A number of commercial adaptations of the old-fashioned lantern slide are available for exhibits, window displays, lectures, etc. . . .

II. Oral Information

. . . If possible, Works Program speakers, especially radio speakers, should be persons who have had some training in delivery, voice modulations, etc. If no trained persons are available, effort should be made to have those who do most of the speaking trained in at least the elements of successful oral presentation.

Presentation by speech has one great advantage over the majority of methods of presentation by the printed word, especially in the case of newspapers and periodicals. The advantage is that in speeches before assemblies and speeches over the radio it is permissible, without violating any of the canons of good taste, to editorialize — express opinions — much more than is possible in articles for newspapers and other publications. . . .

A. *Radio Information*

It is not difficult for an Administrator or his representative to obtain free time from radio stations in his State for talks about the Works Program,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for news broadcasts, radio skits, question-and-answer interviews, and other programs. . . .

1. Talks

Except on matters of extraordinary importance and wide public interest, radio speeches should not require more than five or six minutes for delivery. The best time is between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. . . . The responsibility for the preparation and writing of all radio talks should be placed on one person, to insure uniformity of treatment, good style, and variety of subject. A good "ghost" writer is best. . . .

2. Other

A number of devices may be used to give variety and interest to the radio program. Perhaps the most effective is the combination program plan used in Minnesota. It consists of (1) music to open and close the program; (2) skit, or playlet, depicting in dramatic forms some phase of WPA; (3) talk by administrative official or sponsor about a particular project. This involves the co-operation of (1) the administrative head of the Information Service, who is in administrative charge; (2) the director of the music section of Federal Project No. 1 (or the recreation department of the State WPA) to supply good music; (3) the director of either the Drama section or the Writers' section of Federal Project No. 1, to have some competent person assigned to produce the scripts; (4) the administrative head of the Drama section, to have competent actors assigned to rehearse and present the skits; (5) the "ghost" speech writer of the Information Service; and (6) the speaker. . . .

B. *Assembly Information*

Each State Administrator gets many requests for speakers. The Administrator should select from his staff a group who can speak well, train its members to talk on various parts of the program, and accept all invitations to speak before reputable groups. . . . Do not fail to take full advantage of the "tie-in" opportunity afforded by speeches before assemblies. Copies of all important addresses, both in full and in news summary form, should be given to newspapers and press associations well in advance of delivery. . . . Another "tie-in" opportunity, this time by radio, is open whenever a high administrative official, especially if he is from Washington, comes to a city to make an address before a convention or other assembly. The radio station will usually be glad to give him ten to twenty minutes for a talk. . . .

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Public

Invitations to speak at public gatherings of any reputable character should always be accepted and the best possible presentation made.

2. Semi-public

The reference here is to the wide variety of groups of people of more or less common interest — luncheon clubs, women's clubs, parent-teachers associations, civic and community associations, Leagues of Women Voters, business and trade groups, farm bureaus and granges, organization of federal, State, county, municipal and township officials and employees, and many others. . . .

3. Debates and panels

The forum discussion method seems to be growing in popularity. Speakers who appear before such groups must "know their stuff", however, and must be able to keep their tempers, for they are likely to be subjected to some severe though good-humored heckling.

4. Professional groups

The results of the Works Program in providing appropriate employment for specialized workers should be brought to the attention of their societies. This can well be done by addresses at their meetings, as well as by information supplied to their professional journals. Engineering, architectural, nursing, school, social service, and public health groups are examples.

III. Printed Information

A. *Newspapers*

The American public gains most of its information and therefore formulates most of its opinions from daily and weekly newspapers. News, particularly localized news, about policies and projects of the WPA will always have ready access to newspaper columns, simply because it is news. Therefore the newspapers are the standard medium for reporting to the public on what WPA is doing.

At least one capable, experienced newspaperman, preferably one who has had extensive managerial experience and preferably one who has worked in the State WPA headquarters city and knows the personnel of the newspapers and press associations, should be in every State Information Service. If it is not advisable for administrative reasons or because of his lack of the right temperament for leadership, to make him the head of the Information Service, he should have such rank and salary as will enable him to meet the editors and reporters on equal terms. . . .

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Urban

Beyond current news to dailies and press associations, as well as the necessary blanket mail releases, some States are successfully directing more and more effort toward feature stories, properly illustrated, and toward localizing both straight news and features. . . . Localized copy, given to one newspaper in a city, to all newspapers in a city, or to all newspapers in one area of common news interest, will always command more attention from editors than general mimeographed blanket-coverage. . . . If the series is offered to small city dailies and weeklies, mats and proofs of the layouts should accompany the copy. This could be done in one district or news area after another until the entire State had been covered. . . .

2. Rural

The suggestion about localizing copy for city papers applies with equal force to weeklies, semi-weeklies, and tri-weeklies. But curiously enough, although their appeal is wholly local, they will often use stories of general State-wide interest (it saves writing copy, always a problem to a man who is the entire editorial and advertising staff) so they should be on the mailing list for all blanket stories. . . .

3. Foreign Language Press

Papers printed in foreign languages are very influential among their readers, and wherever they are published they should receive attention.

B. *Periodicals and Pamphlets*

. . . Includes farm, labor, education, religious, professional, business (trade papers for particular groups, Chamber of Commerce publications, financial journals), governmental publications, and the big class known as general magazines. . . . In order to avoid wasting time preparing material that might be unsuitable for the particular publication, it is advisable to consult the editor in advance regarding the right "slant" to be taken in the article. . . . Washington will gladly give any assistance possible along this line.

Pamphlets — "one-shot" publications — are effective if well done and if distributed judiciously to people interested in the subject. New York State recently compiled a thirteen-page mimeographed pamphlet entitled *WPA — Its Fundamentals, Accomplishments, and Purposes* which is an excellent statement of the whole situation. (Sample copies may be obtained from Washington or Albany.) This pamphlet was sent to a mailing list of 7000 women's, service, fraternal, and other organizations, including 930 county divisions of the New York State Grange. . . .

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C. *Production and Filing*

1. Clippings

It is especially important that all articles and editorials expressing criticism of the Works Program be clipped and analyzed. Sometimes a weakness in administration may be discovered. If the writer is in error, a polite letter or personal call, presenting the facts and assuming that the error was based on misinformation, may help to prevent a repetition of the statement. . . .

2. Mail

Careful preparation and constant revision of all lists of addresses are essential to prevent waste. New York City, for instance, has forty-two separate lists of publicity media. A release may be sent to one list, to a combination of lists, or to all of them, as necessary. . . .

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Replies to letters offer one of the few means of giving information about the Program to specific persons, and moreover persons who have already shown interest enough to write concerning it. Newspapers, radios, and signs are addressed to the general public, whereas the appeal of a letter is personal. If careful attention is given to the mail normally handled by each State Administrator and District Director, much information about the Program can be given out and much goodwill be created for it. . . .

The cry of partisanship will not lessen the significance of this propaganda manual, nor will the plea of "education and information" excuse it. The facts are plainly written. They reveal how the New Deal, by exploiting the masses under sentimental shibboleths, has spent billions of dollars in those strata of society where votes are most easily bought. Their fundamental import is that Dr. Roosevelt and his army of promoters are determined that the Democratic Party shall rule in perpetuity.

In the concluding article of this series, to be published next month, THE MERCURY will offer information concerning other propaganda techniques of the Administration, particularly those employed in the magazine, motion picture, and educational fields. There will also be presented a brief description of publicity functions in the White House itself, where Dr. Roosevelt and his hand-picked confidential aides preside in person over the activities of the greatest propaganda trust on earth.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ROAD TO HELL

A Story

By John Fante

When you go to Confession you must tell everything. Anyone who hides a sin gets into trouble right away, for though you fool the priest it is not so easy to fool God. In fact, it can't be done. Every Friday at St. Catherine's we have instructions on the Confessional. Our teacher is Sister Mary Joseph, and she is the one who told us about God's omniscience, which means knowing all things. She proved it with the story of the Kid who actually tried to hide a sin in the Confessional.

Sister Mary Joseph told us this fellow was a pretty good Kid. He studied hard and got good grades. He obeyed his father and mother, and said his morning and evening prayers. He didn't cuss, and all his thoughts were pure. Every Saturday he went to Confession, and every Sunday morning he received Holy Communion. As you can see, there was nothing wrong with a Kid like that.

But it was like everything else. As soon as a fellow is coasting along smooth, here comes the Devil, meaning Temptation. Even a good Kid like this one had plenty of it. Sister Mary Joseph said one day this Kid was walking along downtown, minding his own business, when he came to a window full of baseballs and catcher's gloves. He was a poor Kid. He already owned a catcher's mitt, but it wasn't much good. Well, he'd always wanted a new one. In the window he saw a honey, and right away he wanted it bad. If you want a thing bad, specially something you can't get, it's called Temptation. He wanted that mitt, but he knew he couldn't buy it, and so he should have forgotten about it. But no. He stood in front of that window, and sure enough, along came the Devil. I know how that Kid felt, because I have listened to the Devil plenty, and it seems he is always in front of store-windows waiting for a fellow to come along, specially a fellow who wants a new

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glove, or a gun, or anything that costs lots of money.

The Devil said to the Kid, "My boy, don't be a sap. You want that glove and it costs five dollars. Now tell me where *you'll* get five dollars! It's a cinch your father hasn't got it. So use your head. Go into that store and swipe the glove. It's a sin, but so what! You've been a good boy right along now, but what have you got from it? Nothing! Get smart!"

The Kid stared at the glove and saw himself making sensational one-hand catches with it. He saw all the other Kids in town crowding around, feeling the soft leather, asking him a lot of questions, begging him to play on their teams.

Then the Kid's Guardian Angel stepped up. Sister Mary Joseph said the Guardian Angel was very soothing and patient with that Kid. The Guardian Angel said, "My sweet child, remember that you are a good boy, and God is well pleased. All the baseball gloves on earth, and all the baseball bats, are not equal to one second of the bliss in Paradise. If you steal that glove, God will be very angry. He will punish you, for nothing can be hidden from our Blessed Lord."

Suddenly Sister Mary Joseph stopped. Our whole class was listening with mouths wide open. The girls were on one side of the room, the boys on the other. We could hardly wait for the story to go on. Sister Mary Joseph folded her hands and smiled.

"And now," she said, "who can tell me what that boy did? Were the words of Satan more powerful than the words of his Guardian Angel? Did the boy steal that glove, or did he remain in the state of sanctifying grace by resisting temptation? Who will venture an answer?"

Every hand in the classroom went up and waved like a flag. We were all given a chance to say something. Then a strange thing happened. All the girls said the Kid *didn't* steal that glove, and all the boys said he *did*. We argued back and forth. It was going hot and heavy with the boys winning all the way because we figured the Kid in the story was like us, and nearly all of us had stolen things.

Clyde Myers said, "Sure he stole it! He's a funny guy if he didn't."

"Why Clyde Myers!" Sister Mary Joseph said.

Then my turn came. My folks were poor people, so I knew what to say, because I'd swiped a lot of things in my life, things that cost money. What I mean is this: I never did have enough candy because it was so expensive, so I al-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways swiped it from the Ten-Cent Store. But there were a lot of things I never even thought of stealing, because we had plenty at our house. Like spaghetti. Well, my folks were poor but there was always plenty of spaghetti, so I never even thought of swiping spaghetti. But if spaghetti was as good as candy and as hard to get, I would have swiped it plenty.

"He went in and stole the glove," I said. "He was poor, and that's what he did."

Clyde Myers and I were pals. His folks were not poor, but they wouldn't buy him a ball glove because they were afraid he would break his neck or something playing baseball. So what happened was, Clyde had swiped a glove, not a new one out of a store but an old one out of the gym.

Clyde said, "No. The reason he swiped it was because his folks wouldn't let him have one."

So what happened was, the boys put themselves in the Kid's shoes, and everyone had a different reason why the Kid swiped the glove. But they were all very good reasons. The girls didn't have a chance. They didn't want the Kid in the story to be a thief, so they just said he wasn't. But it didn't cut much ice. The girls didn't like it at all, because they knew they were losing the argument. It got to be a kind of a fight. Then the girls got sulky and mean. After awhile they wouldn't raise their hands. They pretended they weren't even listening.

And Sister Mary Joseph went on with the story. "Unfortunately," she said, "the boys are correct in this case. The hero of our little story did succumb to temptation. Heedless of the warnings of his Guardian Angel, he entered the store, and when the proprietor's eyes were not upon him, he gave himself to his temptations, thereby committing a flagrant violation of God's precept in the Seventh Commandment. Despite the anguish and protestations of his beloved Guardian Angel, despite the torture of his own conscience, he fell before his own weakness, and spurred on by the coaxing of Lucifer, he fell into grievous sin. . . ."

By all of that Sister Mary Joseph meant that the Kid walked into the store, saw that the coast was clear, shoved the glove under his belly next to his sweater, and then ran for it. Next day he showed up on the school grounds with a swell, brand-new catcher's glove. Just as he figured, all the boys were nuts about it. The trouble began when they asked him where he got such a swell glove. He told

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them his father had got it. That was Lie Number One. Somebody asked him how much it was worth. The Kid said he didn't know. That was Lie Number Two, for the glove had been priced at five dollars. Lie Number Three followed immediately: the Kid now saw his chance to make the boys green with envy, and he told his friends the glove was really a present to his father from Joe Di Maggio. This led the boys to ask the Kid how come his father knew a great ball player like Joe Di Maggio. The Kid gave them Lies Number Four and Five by saying his father and Joe had gone to school together in San Francisco, where they played on the same team. Lie Number Six was even worse. The Kid told his pals that Joe Di Maggio considered his father good enough for the big leagues. Lie Number Seven was terrible. The Kid said that, as a matter of fact, his father had once been a big league ball-player with the Boston Red Sox.

By the end of the week the Kid had told so many lies that only God, who knows all things, had any record of their exact number. The Kid had learned that the fateful way to fame and the things of the flesh was in stealing and then lying about it. He was like a snowball rushing downhill, gaining speed at every turn. There was no stopping him. He was on the Road To Hell.

II

When Saturday arrived, the Kid had a chance to go to Confession, tell his sins, and return once more to the Road To Paradise and sanctifying grace. Sister Mary Joseph paused again. Everyone in that class was worried about the Kid now. We felt better when Sister said he did go to Confession that Saturday. Ah, but something terrible happened. He had been too long a companion of Lucifer. When he entered the Confessional, a great fear came over the Kid. He simply couldn't tell the priest he had swiped a ball glove. He was under the Devil's spell. He coughed and stammered, finally giving up. The priest didn't know the Kid was holding back, so he pronounced Absolution and made the Sign of the Cross. The Kid left the church bathed in sweat, and Satan laughed like a fiend, for Satan knew he had pulled a fast one on the priest.

But not on God, because that can't be done. All night long the Kid thought of what he had done. His conscience gnawed like a fat

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rat, and he couldn't sleep a wink. Before him yawned the jaws of Hell, and far behind him flickered the bright lanterns on the path to Eternal Bliss. Was this Kid doomed, or wasn't he? Sister Mary Joseph took off her glasses and wiped them, and her face was set and kind of sad. From that we knew something awful was coming. She put on her glasses and spoke. It was tough on the Kid.

Concealing a sin in the Confessional is bad enough and a mortal sin, but actually to go to Holy Communion afterward is the worst sin possible — a sacrilege. Sunday morning the Kid got up and walked bleary-eyed to Mass with his parents. They were pious, humble folks who always received Holy Communion on Sunday morning. Now the great test arrived. Would the Kid brave the shocking disappointment of his parents and not go to Holy Communion, or would he sink deeper into the grasp of Lucifer? The Kid was in a tough spot. If the Kid didn't go to Communion, then his folks would know something was wrong, and after services they would make him come clean. That would mean the loss of his new ball glove, plus a shellacking from his father, who was a pious man with a horror of Evil. But if he kept his mouth shut and went to Communion, he would fool his folks and still have the glove. Oh yes, but could he fool God? *That* was the question.

And it was here that the Kid made his big mistake. So far he had deceived his friends, the priest, and his parents. Drunk with power, and deep in the spell of Satan, he now challenged the Supreme Being. And there, kneeling beside his humble parents, he made the decision which was to prove a fatal mistake. Sin or no sin, God or the Devil, he loved that ball glove. He decided that no matter what happened, he would go to Communion.

After the Consecration he walked down the aisle and knelt at the Communion rail. Side by side with his humble parents, he awaited the Blessed Sacrament. Would the priest know the black horror of that Kid's soul? Would a miracle happen? Would God in his wrath strike down this sinner who had sold out to Lucifer? Nobody in the class could guess. It was Sister Mary Joseph's story, and we couldn't guess the end. But it certainly looked bad for the Kid.

The priest came down from the Altar and gave Holy Communion to members of the congregation. The Kid's mother and father received, bowing their heads in hu-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mility and piety. Then it was the Kid's turn. He lifted his face, and the priest placed the Communion on his tongue. Nothing happened except that Lucifer snickered, and the Kid bowed his head. That is, nothing happened right away.

But after he got back to his pew, a slow change came over the Kid. He felt a stiffness in his bones, starting at his feet. It moved upward. It reached his knees. Then his waist. Gradually it crept to his shoulders. Now it was in his neck and heading for his eyes and ears. On and on it moved. Finally it covered him all the way. God had answered the challenge of Lucifer. The Devil didn't sneer any more; he fled. For the Kid had turned to stone!

When we heard that we were like stone too. The whole class was dead quiet. Then we realized Sister Mary Joseph's story was over. She sat up there and smiled.

"And the moral of that story is this," she said. "Always tell the truth, whether it be in the Confessional or out of it. Avoid Temptation. Never harbor thoughts of stealing. Never tell little lies, or big lies, or any kind of lies. Be truthful to the very end."

The class sighed. Some of us said pheeeeew! We were sure glad that story was over.

III

After school, Clyde Myers and I walked downtown. We fooled around, staring into shop windows. The Hardware Store window was chuck full of baseball supplies, balls, bats, and gloves.

"Let's go in," Clyde said. "We'll say we're just looking around."

Clyde walked down one aisle and I walked down the other. The clerks didn't pay any attention to us. There was a whole basket full of baseballs. I could have got plenty but I didn't feel like it. At the back of the store we passed each other, and Clyde walked up my aisle and I walked up his. Then we met at the front door and walked out.

"Did you get anything?" Clyde said.

"No," I said.

"Me neither."

For quite awhile we stood out front and stared at the baseball supplies in the window.

"Do you think that Kid was really turned to stone?" Clyde said.

"Nah," I said. "It's a lot of baloney."

"Yeah," he said. "It's a lot of bunk."

"Well," I said. "So long."

"So long," he said. "See you tomorrow."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORIAL

Why All Politicians Are Crooks

On the day the All-Star baseball game was played in Washington, the Senate was discussing the Judiciary Bill, which is the most important measure that this body has had to consider in the whole century and a half of its existence. The bill contemplated changing the entire theory and structure of American government; as Mr. Nock has said, it was simply a proposal to add a kept judiciary to a kept Congress; its effect would have been to convert the government into a strictly one-man show. This issue would seem highly important merely for its novelty, if not for anything else. Nevertheless, on this particular day, a motion was made and carried without opposition, that the Senate should put the issue on ice overnight and adjourn, so that the members might go to the ball game.

Now there is nothing actually sinful about this performance, and certainly nothing illegal. We may take it that morally as well as legally the Senate acted quite within its competence. Moreover, no one would be mean enough to begrudge a hard-working Senator a couple of hours off wherein to sweat and holler beneath the burning sun, and perchance eke out his livelihood by putting a little money on the victorious team. Senators are nominally our employees, of course; they are our hired men and presumably should more or less keep union hours. Still, as a rule, when an extra-fancy ball game is scheduled, decent employers do not too closely question the office-boy about the historicity of his grandmother's demise. But quite aside from law and morals and the right to lapse occasionally into frivolity under ordinary circumstances, such a lapse under *those* circumstances has a very bad look. No doubt baseball is in a sense a national institution, and there is no harm in its being officially recognized on occasion, but this was distinctly not the occasion; and moreover, such men as our Senators are popularly supposed to be would have felt most strongly that it was not the occasion.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus the incident presents an interesting puzzle. In the crucial hours of a military campaign, the officers of the General Staff do not knock off for a day's fishing. They do not even think of such a thing, even though under other circumstances they might rather fish than do anything else. If they went fishing while the fate of a campaign was in the balance, or if they even thought of fishing, they would contravene the opinion which the public had of them. Whereas if the public took for granted that they were able, responsible, and dignified men, they would prove themselves temperamentally incompetent, irresponsible, and frivolous with a frivolity that comes pretty close to treason. Now, in the present instance, what are we to say when we see a body of men whom the public regards as able, responsible, and dignified, deliberately walking out on the gravest issue that the country has ever confronted, and going to a ball game?

At first sight it is, as we say, a puzzle. There are certain puzzles of the jig-saw type which are almost impossible to solve without first discovering a small key-piece, and discovering that it *is* the key-piece. When this is done, you have no further trouble; the puzzle falls together almost of itself. The difficulty of these puzzles is that the key-piece may be staring you in the face for hours before you find out that it *is* the key-piece. In that case you laboriously build up the puzzle all around it, matching the pieces by repeated trial and error, until finally you discover the one piece which, if you could have identified it to begin with, would have solved the puzzle for you at once.

The puzzle presented by the behavior of the Senate is like that. There is one key-fact which, if you get it well into your head, will resolve any puzzling anomaly which presents itself in the political life of any country on earth. Abraham Lincoln, himself by far the ablest politician we ever produced, put his finger firmly on this key-fact in saying that "the way of the politician is a long step removed from common honesty". That is to say, all professional politicians, without exception, are by profession common rogues. Wherever they are found, and by whatever test of ordinary honesty they may be judged, they are indistinguishable from a professional-criminal class.

If, therefore, the Senate be made up of able, responsible, and disinterested men, according to the gen-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eral popular view of its composition, then its action in shutting up shop at such a time to see a ball game is utterly unaccountable. Such men in such circumstances have no mind for baseball; it is inconceivable that they should have. If, on the other hand, the Senate be made up of professional politicians — that is to say, of venal, self-seeking, and dishonest persons, the kind of person whom one looks at and passes by — then its indecorous action is logical, consistent, and presents no difficulties whatever; it is quite what one might expect.

Hence one who wishes to clear up in his own mind the apparent anomalies of politics must accept the key-fact that, first, all professional politicians, *without exception,* are common rogues; and second, that they are *by profession* common rogues. The moment you admit the possibility of an exception to this rule, you lose your grasp of the situation. One often hears the superficial saying that "politics is a filthy trade, I know, but you can't bring a blanket indictment against the whole race of politicians. There is Senator Squirtwater, for instance, who has been in politics for years and is honest as the day, a fine man and no rogue. I know him well. So is Governor Diddlebury no rogue, but a thoroughly honest man. What do you say about that?"

You say simply that it is not so. Under the system of government by party, the moment a man enters politics his party instantly confiscates his character. If anyone doubts this, the best way to find out is to try going into politics, and see what happens. It is notoriously impossible — everyone knows it — for a man to become a President or Governor or Senator or a pound-master in a country town, without putting his character as well as his abilities at the beck and call of his party. If he does not himself participate in all the rogueries — the iniquitous trades and deals, the malversations, blackmailings, briberies, collusions — which are incidental to his party's success and his own promotion, he must inevitably participate in some of them and acquiesce in the rest. He must, as we say, "play politics"; we have this special name for that special mode of conduct; and this selling-out of character marks him as a knave, and makes his general semblance of a sound character only the more odious and revolting. It is a true instinct which makes the general run of mankind feel a sneaking regard for the Platts, Quays, and Penroses of poli

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tics, who did not pretend to be anything more or better than they were, and which begets a corresponding distaste for those of the reforming or uplifting type who think they can successfully compromise with evil in order that good may come of it. When a man is found playing the piano in a brothel, one naturally thinks that if he is not a procurer he ought to be; and if he frankly says he is, one can at least have some small measure of respect for his candor.

Herbert Spencer cites with approval the saying that "wherever government is, there is villainy". This is true; and when we try to account for it, we must bear in mind that government is the only human enterprise which offers a sure immunity for crime; it is the only institution which assumes no responsibility for any mode of honorable and decent behavior. Every day we live brings us irrefutable evidence that government is not interested in abolishing crime, but only in maintaining its own monopoly of crime. With regard to major crime, government not only sanctions the committing of murder, robbery, arson, rapine, in its own interest, but it also organizes them on a grand scale and keeps up a prodigious standing apparatus for their perpetration. With regard to minor crime, it issues bonds, for example, with its promise to pay in gold at the then-current rate, and shortly goes back on its promise; and this is fraud. It levies a special tax for a special purpose, say a tax on motors and motor-supplies for the purpose of building and maintaining roads, and then devotes one-fourth of the proceeds to this purpose and diverts the rest; and this is obtaining money under false pretenses, or else it is embezzlement — take your choice. The notorious activities of our political almoners in distributing public money "where it will do the most good" are directed either toward securing votes or influencing judicial processes; and in the one case this is bribery, and in the other it is embracery.

Furthermore, government administers law without the slightest regard to justice, reason, or decency. Mr. Gerald W. Johnson has cited the recent instance of a woman who worked ten years on a best-selling novel which brought her in half a million dollars; and because this pay for ten years' work was received in a lump, so to speak, within the space of one year, the Federal Government and the State of Georgia between them took away nearly half of it. Again, the other day we had the confession of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an assistant Attorney-General, Mr. Jackson, that when a dispute about interpretation of the income-tax law is brought into court, the government regularly takes the side which will bring in the most money; and hence it may be found arguing both ways in two different courts at the same time. One has to have a good lively imagination to think up anything more despicable than such behavior. The Baltimore *Evening Sun* has this to say about it:

> In short, whoever has to deal with the Government has to deal with a sinuous, tricky, and unscrupulous customer, who is to be trusted not one inch. It has always been so, and as long as the Government is run by politicians, it will continue to be so.

Lastly, to account for the frequency and flagrancy of such misdoings, it is necessary to keep in mind a third fact which owes its existence to the two just mentioned. Because professional politicians are what they are, and because their unsavory calling gives them the immunity it does, it therefore follows that a people always gets the worst government it will put up with. It is natural for anyone to make the most of his opportunities, and if you issue a letter-of-marque to safe-blowers and porch-climbers, you must expect these gentry to push their operations right up to the point where society becomes exasperated and reaches down the shotgun. Precisely so will government push its interests as far as they can go without stirring up the public to rebellion; and this means that it must always be the worst it dare be, as we find it always is.

Government has created for itself a great prestige which, more than anything else, stands in the way of a general understanding and acceptance of these three facts, even though we have an instinctive knowledge of them. Our very phrase, "Oh, that's politics", when some notable piece of rascality is brought to our attention, shows how far our instinct has run ahead of our intelligence; and this is chiefly because our intelligence has been hamstrung by the mythical prestige which government has built up for itself in all sorts of ways and by all kinds of means. No doubt the great majority of our citizens would resent the idea that a President, Senator, or Governor should *ipso facto* be regarded as a common crook, and if a demonstration were offered they would not care to listen. They would probably deny that their judgment was at all affected by a mythical prestige; yet we all remember the Coolidge myth, the Hoover myth, and innumerable others, and we have no

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

difficulty about remembering the means employed to build them, or the sleazy materials out of which they were constructed.

Four hundred years ago, for like reasons, it was equally hard for the average European to get the social character of the Church and its functionaries through his head; and this was bad for him. If he had made a disinterested effort to understand it he would have been a good deal better off; but prestige interfered. Prestige likewise interfered with a clear view of the post-medieval governing classes, the royalty and nobility. So now it interferes with an acceptance of the three facts by which alone the anomalies of modern politics can be competently interpreted and fully understood. The key-fact is that all professional politicians are, and in virtue of their profession must be, common rogues. The second fact is that government, far from wishing to abolish crime and rascality, is concerned only with safeguarding its own monopoly of them. Finally, the third fact, which proceeds logically from the other two, is that every people must necessarily always have the worst government it will tolerate.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICANA

CALIFORNIA

EFFECTS of the higher education upon West Coast civilization, as chronicled by the Associated Press:

> Berkeley won't see red as often hereafter. The city administration today ordered all fire trucks, which now bear a color closely approximating the cardinal red of Stanford University, painted blue and gold, the hues of the University of California.

AT LAST there is evolved a sound and fool-proof plan for governing this unhappy Republic, according to a press release:

> At a meeting of the Los Angeles Scientific Psychic Research Society, Inc., the following question was offered as a subject: "Of What Value Is Telepathy in the Education of the Youth of Today?" The subject was open for discussion, and Dr. Edward Saint, a fellow member and investigator, presented a revolutionary idea. Taken from the stenographic notes of the Society, the plan, in condensed form, is this:
>
> To nominate as candidate for President, George Washington; for the Vice-Presidency, Thomas Jefferson; Alexander Hamilton, as Secretary of State; James Monroe, Secretary of the Treasury; Admiral Dewey, Secretary of the Navy; Theodore Roosevelt, Secretary of War; Abraham Lincoln, Secretary of Domestic and Foreign Relations; *and Harry Houdini for head of the Secret Service.* The co-operation of those minds, through President Roosevelt as present mediator, will gradually do away with large salaries, the millions spent because of having to resort to the Supreme Court, and the elimination of graft would be achieved at once. Congress and the Senate would be entirely eliminated, as well as their salaries and upkeep, and instead, a patriotic Seer from each State would be placed in Washington. It is of course understood that only tried and true Seers would be employed along with their secretaries and typists, and they, the Seers in Washington, would contact these past great men who would constitute the head of our government, and from these tried and true Seers and Prophets, bring the laws, wishes, and the upbuilding plans as the past great men should and would designate.
>
> This plan, of course, is elastic and would probably take several years or more to make acceptable and workable, but the groundwork has already been laid. Every town and city of any size or importance, has already their Psychic Circles with their tens of thousands of active members. There are well-known educational books and inspirational writings on the subject, and by their uniting in every community, combining as a whole, could recognize the Invisible Force to further this plan to its ultimate realization. Once in power, laws favorable to this growing psychic organization would be passed and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

present great men, such as Hoover and Roosevelt, would have the pleasure of looking forward to joining forces with the past great men once they, themselves, have passed into the Great Beyond. Naturally, the same set-up would be formed as to the governorship of each State, and likewise, carrying this same idea as to the mayor of each city.

The Los Angeles Scientific Psychic Research Society has gone on record as favoring this far-reaching arrangement, and hopes through publicity and controversy that a workable plan along these lines can be evolved. Let it be further understood that in addition to the names mentioned for the sake of explaining the plan, that other great minds even of centuries past, if they can be contacted, could readily be incorporated into the governing body.

COLORADO

POETIC report on the progress of a great American memorial, as issued by the ubiquitous publicity wizards of the Broadmoor Hotel:

> The beautiful Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun is to become one of the most unique singing towers in the world. Spencer Penrose, who has built the granite memorial on Cheyenne Mountain, half a mile above the Broadmoor Hotel, is now having installed an elaborate system of Westminster chimes and vibra harp which can be operated automatically or through a console on which concerts can be given.
>
> The silvery notes will be amplified and sent out over the entire Pike's Peak region. Westminster chimes will be heard on the hour and each quarter-hour, starting with the songs of the birds at dawning of each new day and continuing until eleven at night when they close the day with a hymn. After dark, floodlights will illuminate the shaft like a jewel set in velvet. The lights will come on gradually ten seconds before the song of the chimes, and thirty seconds after the last note has been lost in the night, the light will be dimmed to extinction.

FLORIDA

THE celebrated St. Petersburg *Times* chronicles the first intimation that the Royal Family is in the White House to stay, in reporting remarks of the Hon. Ed. H. Becket, County Commissioner at Tarpon Springs, who bolstered his opposition to a cut in the Dole by stating:

> I just know President Roosevelt never intended for one moment for his subjects to be treated like this.

ILLINOIS

THE New Aesthetics, as dutifully reported by the cultured Chicago *Herald-Examiner:*

> There's just as much beauty in a two-dollar machine-made cocktail shaker as there is in some of the hand-wrought, pre-Christian vases of Greece, the Rotary Club was told at its Hotel Sherman luncheon Tuesday.
>
> Maker of the statement was Dr. James Selby Thomas, president of Clarkson College of Technology and director of the Chrysler Institute of Engineering. He credited the technological advances of American industry with enriching the lives of workers.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SOCIO-BIOLOGICAL note from the columns of the ever-wholesome Chicago *Tribune:*

All-time records of the Cook County marriage license bureau were broken yesterday when 793 couples took out licenses in a last week-end rush *before the State venereal-test law goes into effect.*

NEW YORK

GENEROUS offer to the rising young literati of the Republic, as advertised in the columns of the distinguished *Readers' World:*

WRITERS...

I am a selling author. Have several complete, unpublished stories, not quite suitable for mags I write for. Will sell — 3 for $1.

Arthur Gage
Brooklyn, N. Y.

OHIO

NOTE on the passing of the great American race, as broadcast by the office of Toledo Associates:

Homesite of the last full-blooded Indian to live in Northwestern Ohio is now a green at the Chippewa Country Club. Mrs. Victoria Cadaract was the squaw who died in 1915 at the age of 105.

SINISTER capitalist conspiracy is uncovered by one of Dr. Roosevelt's traveling missionaries, according to the Associated Press:

The "strip-tease" entered America's Labor picture yesterday as Philip G. Phillips, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, filed a complaint against the Clover Fork Coal Company of Kitts, Harlan County, Ky., alleging it imported dancers to lure employees from union meetings. Phillips said he was told by representatives of the United Mine Workers Union that the union, able to offer only business matters, "found it had to meet the competition of the free exhibitions" staged by the company on meeting nights.

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

A PROGRESSIVE merchant of Manila takes the public into his confidence, as noted in the advertising columns of the *Daily Bulletin:*

We are seriously thinking of opening up a LINGERIE and GOWN department in our Store, which is something badly needed in Manila — not a place where one can get a distinguished gown to fit the figure and with so many good figures. Our dresses will be sold with a pedigree starting from our own original designs and they will naturally be copyright. This will be an exclusive feature for the future, but for the present, our plans are not mature. Meanwhile we continue to sell HARDWARE and the future will take care of itself.

PARSONS HARDWARE CO.

TEXAS

NECESSARY steps are taken to protect a Christian audience from temptation, according to the Commerce *Journal:*

"The Fall of a Woman" will be the subject for Sunday evening at the First Baptist Church. Real facts and truths will be revealed. The eleven fans have been reconditioned and they will help to cool the building.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STATE OF THE UNION

By Albert Jay Nock

The Packing of Hugo Black

Mr. Black's appointment to the Supreme Court will be very stale news by the time these words get into print; but there are a few things to be said about it which will be as much worth saying ten years from now, or fifty years, as they are now. They will no doubt be said so often fifty years hence that nobody will miss them or misunderstand them; but that will not do this month's readers of The Mercury much good. At present it is unlikely that any commentator on public affairs will say them, and still more unlikely that any publication could be found to print them if he did. Nevertheless they ought to be said, because the kind of people who read The Mercury would already naturally have an uneasy sense that something of the sort is true, and that sense ought to be backed up by seeing these matters set forth in print.

The incident of Mr. Black's appointment is the most exhibitory incident that has happened in this country for years. That is to say, it shows up more truths and shows them up in a brighter and clearer light than any other single turn which our public affairs have taken in the lifetime of the present generation at least, and probably much longer. It shows up the kind of President we have. It shows up the Senate. It shows up our newspapers. It shows up organized Labor. Finally, it shows up the kind of people we have, who would elect such a President and such a Senate, and who would accept such newspapers and tolerate an organization of Labor which avows such principles and employs such methods as those to which our present organization seems to stand committed. Mr. Black's appointment shows up all these discreditable matters in one motion and so completely that the dullest eye can make no mistake about any of them.

What it shows about the President's personal character may be passed over with no more than a word. He has often already revealed himself as just the kind of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man, as far as personal character goes, who might be implicitly trusted to make just that kind of appointment. One need say no worse than that, and one could not say better. Apparently, however, this incident shows something about his political character and qualities that is worth remarking. We have all seen good evidence of it before, but nothing so completely and strikingly exhibitory as this. Mr. Roosevelt has, up to very lately, been regarded as a first-class politician; probably many people still so regard him. This opinion is mostly justifiable. He is a first-rate politician in every essential respect but one, and that one is a killer. A really top-notch politician has to have his temper always in hand. He must always be able to "take it"; and this Mr. Roosevelt cannot do. He has all sorts of political ability, but that is not enough; he has not the politician's temperament. The test of a really great politician is not how he behaves in smooth water, but in rough water. Lincoln, Quay, Platt, and Penrose had not only the politician's peculiar ability, but they also had the politician's temperament. They never let annoyance, irritation, sulkiness, or vindictiveness run away with their good judgment; and right here is where Mr. Roosevelt misses the mark of being a great politician.

It is a bad miss, too, for if a politician in a fit of temper makes a ghastly break and still wins his point, he is little, if any, better off than if he had lost it; for the consequences of his victory return to plague him. At the present time, for example, it is a safe bet that the Senators who are especially tickled by the egregious Mr. Black's appointment and who voted with most gusto for his confirmation, are those of a cynical turn of mind who secretly or openly detest Mr. Roosevelt. It is those who are friendly to him and at the same time intelligent enough to see beyond their noses, who must be feeling a little blue at the moment. The job of a Supreme Court justice is not quite the same thing as the job of a police magistrate in Alabama or the job of investigating congressional lobbies; and some, at least, among Mr. Roosevelt's friends must be intelligent enough to know this fact, and to be rather anxious about its repercussions.

But editors and correspondents are busily building up a myth for Mr. Black as a great lawyer, and a myth of his appointment as a great stroke of political shrewdness on the part of Mr. Roosevelt. We need

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not concern ourselves with exploding the first myth; the mere lapse of time will take care of that. With regard to the second, the editors and correspondents do not tell us just what political purpose this unconscionable appointment serves, or can be made to serve. They do not even make a respectable fist at telling us anything that normal intelligence can get down without retching. Will it strengthen Mr. Roosevelt's supporters? One would suppose, on the contrary, it must embarrass them dreadfully. Will it tend to reunite the Party? Will it herd back disaffected Southern sentiment into the fold? Will it attract and reassure the wavering? Only a pretty hardy believer could give an affirmative answer on any of these points; and so, if the thing is such a great stroke of politics, one may fairly ask just what will it do?

It will, of course, put another New Dealer on the bench, but then the inconvenient question instantly comes up, why go out of the way to pick on one so thoroughly discredited? There was no need of it. Suppose Mr. Roosevelt had picked another Cardozo; an able lawyer, an experienced judge, a man of unimpeachable character and very high culture, and one who is also on record as a plenty good-enough New Dealer for anybody, always on the Liberal side, always willing to stretch the Constitution to the ripping-point in behalf of the greatest good to the greatest number. Mr. Roosevelt could have found such a man; there are two or three of them around. This would have put a powerful weapon in the hands of his supporters. They could have said, "There, you see what all the commotion about Court-packing amounts to. You have had your fears for nothing. The appointment is perfectly respectable, as we knew it would be. It shows that Mr. Roosevelt can be trusted to do the right thing, just as we always said he could be." Such an appointment would have gone a long way to reassure the hesitating, buck up the doubtful, and best of all, it would have put the burden of apology on Mr. Roosevelt's critics instead of on his supporters, those unhappy gentry who even now must be saying to themselves, "One or two more such breaks as this, and that man will be up Salt Creek, and we will be up Salt Creek with him."

It would seem that a really first-class politician would have seen this chance to take the wind out of his enemies' sails, and would have

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acted accordingly. The fact that Mr. Roosevelt did not do so makes it fairly clear that he had no special political end in view, but merely made the appointment in a fit of swaggering bad temper. It was the act of a man who conceives himself challenged to do his very filthiest, and says, "I'll show 'em." No good politician ever lets any such incentive throw him off the rails; you simply cannot imagine a high-grade political artist like Matt Quay cutting up the petulant antics of a spoiled brat. Hence it appears that the myth of Mr. Roosevelt's great political acumen must shortly go the inglorious way of other myths that have been built up around his person.

Hence also the incident is clear evidence of what the President and the Senate think of the Supreme Court; and by providing that evidence, the President and the Senate give the country an accurate measure of their own sense of propriety and decency. One of the objections alleged against Mr. Black is that in raiding the files of the telegraph companies, he contravened not only the Bill of Rights, but the common law as well. The legal aspect of Mr. Black's proceedings may properly be left for lawyers to deal with, but on the decency of his conduct a layman may pass a perfectly competent judgment. Pawing over other people's private correspondence is something that a decent person not only does not do, but does not countenance; and the members of the Supreme Court are decent persons. One could hardly imagine any of them purposefully opening any message not addressed to himself, or one who would not regard the act as distinctly low and offensive, by whomsoever done. The President and the Senate, however, apparently never entertained the notion of any serious incongruity in placing Mr. Black in such company; and thereby, as I say, they give their own measure. They are probably capable of understanding that a legal point sustained against a candidate might make him objectionable to the members of the Court; but they are incapable of understanding that the fact of a candidate being a vulgar dog who rifles other people's correspondence could possibly make him objectionable to them.

Finally, in considering the way Mr. Black's appointment has been received by the people, and especially by organized Labor, it should be said that there is a great deal of culpable ignorance afloat concerning the Court's functions and duties. One hears it said, for

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

instance, that there should be a good economist on the bench. Well, perhaps it would be nice enough to have a good one there, or a good poet, musician, taxidermist, anything you like. But as Mr. Justice Roberts explained the functions of the Court not long ago, a knowledge of economics would be no more practical use to a justice than a knowledge of Sanskrit — perhaps not so much. Likewise also there seems to be a very hazy popular conception of a justice's duties. Those who are pleased by Mr. Black's appointment, for instance, appear to think that all he will be expected to do is to sit around and smoke until a New Deal case comes on, and then say, "Well, I can't understand the argument and I don't know anything about the law, but I'm for the New Deal, so you can put me down in the affirmative."

A member of the Court bar, however, tells me it does not go quite so easy as all that. Cases even remotely concerning the New Deal do not come anywhere near to one per cent of the Court's business. That business comprises cases taken from anywhere and everywhere in the vast realm of the law, and each justice is supposed to be equal to tackling one-ninth of the business; he is expected to pull his weight. Now, imagine an opinion of Mr. Black's in a tough admiralty case, or a knotty patent case, or a horrible tangle concerning mechanics' liens — imagine that opinion being passed around among the eight justices for concurrence or dissent, and imagine what it would look like when the eight got through commenting on it.

The Supreme Court, by and large, has always been a pretty able body, but there are a few instances in its history — one in particular, I remember — where a member could not pull his own weight, and his fellow-justices, tired of cleaning up his work for him, finally brought pressure on him to resign. This may not be necessary in the case of Mr. Black. He may be found legally ineligible. On the day I write this (the nineteenth of August) I see that a suit has been started to determine his eligibility. But whatever happens, three facts will remain. First, that he has been appointed; second, that the appointment has been confirmed; and third, everyone concerned in these misfeasances has indelibly marked himself contemptible.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LIBRARY

Notes on an Economic Royalist[1]

By John W. Thomason, Jr.

The past May, at his Winter home in Florida, John Davison Rockefeller died, having lived a hundred years less two. For he was born in 1839, when Martin Van Buren was president and the voice of General Andrew Jackson still echoed mightily across the land. The century through which he was to live has been perhaps the most eventful in recorded history, and he set his impress large upon it. Much has been written of him, and much more will be written. Of this literature, the latest item is a suave and concise summary of his life and works, from the fluent pen of Mr. B. F. Winkelman. But the vital essence of the man is published more enduringly in such things as the Rockefeller Foundation.

So that, if I may, I will tell you a story. . . .

* * *

We always thought it was the February hike that brought it on, although you never really know. Our son Jack, aged eleven, was a keen Scout, and he transferred his membership from the Washington troop to the Dragon Patrol, as soon as we arrived in Peking. The Dragon outfit possessed features of unusual interest. Its Scoutmaster was a vigorous and clever young American missionary, and the rank and file were American, English, Japanese, Chinese, French, and German; and there was one authentic Red Russian, Master Leo Lenin Artimev, smart as a whip, the son of the only accredited member of the Communist Party in North China: they all attended the fine American School in the East City.

This day, a Saturday, the Scoutmaster was hiking them out through Chien Mên and the Chinese City to the open spaces around the Temple of Heaven, and Jack had to go: if he didn't, he pointed out, he would be called

[1] *John D. Rockefeller*, by B. F. Winkelman. $1.50. *Winston.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a sissy and lose much face. Although he is prone to respiratory afflictions, and the dusty North China Plain, its air laden with the filth of centuries, is not kind to weak throats, he appeared to be free of sniffles and sneezes and perfectly well. His mother and I extended permission, insisting merely that he wear breeches and puttees instead of the shorts and wool stockings which are regulation in the hearty Dragon Patrol. He stood my formal inspection after breakfast, straight and slim under service kit: canteen filled with chow-water, sandwiches and such in haversack, knife and coil of rope correct, and sweaters and mufflers to the limit of his carrying capacity. For pure swank he had a curved Mongol bow and a quiver of arrows slung across his back. He departed by motor for the appointed rendezvous, and I went off to the Guard, where my Machine-Gun Company (the 38th) would shortly turn out for the weekly review.

It was just above freezing and a vile bad day, with low clouds threatening snow and an unaccustomed dampness in the air. Peking is very cold and very hot in season, but rarely damp. At lunch, Leda and I spoke of the Son, and hoped the patrol was sheltered somewhere for their chow arrangements, which invariably included alfresco cooking. She had driven out in the forenoon and observed them doing evolutions in a system of Chinese practice trenches near the old execution grounds (trenches probably in furious use as I write this, in August, '37), and had from the Scoutmaster the time of their return march. She said she would send the car to bring him home, if the day grew colder. The car went as ordered, about three, when the short Winter day was thickening down to twilight and the wind had turned northeast and raw: but Yang returned alone, reporting to us that Young Master declined to ride. Maybeso more better, commented the Number One Boy, translating Yang's crackling Shansi dialect: young Master Jack lose much face with other boys if he ride motor car and they walking. To lose face is terribly serious in China. About tea-time Jack was at home; we restored him with hot milk and all the sandwiches he would eat, while he sat by the sea-coal fire and said he'd had a fine day and was just pleasantly tired: got cold only once, when they sat for an hour in the trench and listened to a lecture with demonstrations on some important feature of scoutcraft.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leda hoped, anxiously, that he sat on his poncho — not on the bare ground. Of course he sat on the bare ground, he told her severely — like everybody else. And he demanded that, in future, he be spared the embarrassment of having a car sent for him, Yang, that monkey, running slow along the column and honking at him. My goodness, he complained, it was awful. Yang wouldn't leave us — just wouldn't! He was flushed and handsome in the firelight. We told him we hoped he hadn't caught his death of cold, and regarded him with great pride.

Late that night, when we came home, his mother looked in on him and thought his sleep restless and his head a little hot. Over-tired, maybe; his breathing was all right. Jane Cates and young Clifton were visiting us from Shanghai, and next day there was snow on the ground and no paper-chase in consequence; and we went out to see the Summer Palace, which is one of the sights of the world. I will always remember the beauty of the countryside that Sunday. The sky had cleared, and it was bitter cold, and little gusts of wind blew the snow like sand from the golden tile of the dragon-crested roofs, leaving enough of it in crack and crevice to point the unusual lines of temple architecture. The Western Hills were blue and silver in the sun, with every detail hard and clear; and the drab ugly nakedness of the Winter fields was sheeted in white, against which the dark evergreens of the tombs showed almost black. From the Long-Life Temple which the Old Dowager raised on the ridge above the Summer Palace grounds, we could see right out to the curve of the earth. The radio towers Tungcho-way were distinct on the skyline, miles beyond the long mass of Peking; and southwest, where the Western Hills run down to the river, we made out the graceful tracery of Marco Polo Bridge. (They are fighting today over that country, and I hope no shells fall upon the frail and unearthly loveliness of the Old Dowager's pleasance.) In the photographs we took, Jack looks sick. His face is thin and pinched. But we did not see what the camera saw.

The scarlet fever struck right after that. In Asia, all diseases are violent and hit with the suddenness of thunder. You sit at dinner beside some pretty girl, and miss her at cocktail parties the next few days, and ask somebody where she is. Oh, they tell you, we've just heard she's in the hos-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pital, not expected to live. Or, likely as not: She died last night. That sort of thing. All at once, Jack had a temperature: he had a very high temperature. The Medical Officer came from the Guard, and stayed. Presently he summoned a nurse, a plump English lady with never an haitch to her tongue and interminable reminiscences of having seen the Dear Queen, but abounding in kindness and good works. Our household, which was in ordinary a cheerful place, went into shadow, and the shadow lay for a long time. The Medico brought other doctors, specialists: Jack said that his head hurt: he had, he conceded, an ear-ache, and his eyes were bright with fever. In an afternoon, through the brown gloom of a dust storm, we took him to the hospital.

Of the next three weeks we have mercifully forgotten much, but when they were over, I was not young any more. The days, as one remembers, ran together. Almost immediately they were saying, "Mastoid", which is a dreadful word. The head surgeon in the eye, ear, nose, and throat department was a Chinese gentleman, America- and Vienna-trained, with a worldwide reputation. The story ran that his attention was drawn to mastoids when he was house surgeon in a Boston hospital, the year of Spanish Influenza; that would be 1918, and he operated on hundreds of the things. He was a quiet-spoken, courteous doctor, who talked in simple language. His hands had symmetry and strength, and they were the most beautiful hands I have ever seen on a human being. He operated. Then we were learning the word streptococcus, which is also a very bad word.

In a week, the other mastoid process, the left one, fired up, and he operated again. And the third week, the right one had to be reopened. Jack's fever chart, those days, resembled an engineer's profile of the Bolivian Andes: characteristic of the malady, they told us. Then the infection involved his kidneys: I think the word is nephritis: and he turned yellow, and one afternoon we thought he was going to die. I walked in the corridor and reviewed the years since the June evening in Camaquey when he was born, and tried to adjust myself to not having a son. My service in the Marine Corps has been extensive and various, and I have seen much of human misfortune, but nothing to prepare me for this. When I could stay away no longer, I returned

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to his room, and he was not dead; and while I looked, I saw the life come back into him, and the doctors straightened up by his bed and nodded to each other; and Doctor Lui suggested, gently, that my wife step out and take a breath of air.

He was a long time getting well, and Leda and I became habituated to that hospital, and to the tides of human misery that flow through it. Among the patients were Marines of our guard, ill beyond the simple resources of our sick bay; and tourists, stricken between sailings, and Old China Hands, and diplomats. There were Cantonese merchants and Chinese war lords, and coolies from Paomachang and Shantung Province, and Hunan; and Mongols from the high plateau Ghengis knew. There were farmers who had walked a thousand miles, carrying their sick in their arms; and magnates who brought their gallstones and stomach ulcers in chartered transport planes. And the swift efficiency of the place, its complete equipment, its immense and specialized staff, assembled internationally, were there for all of them. They paid according to their means; and if they had nothing they paid nothing.

The richsha coolies will take you there if you say, simply, "The *Fu*". Otherwise, you can say "The Peking Union Medical College"; for it houses a very comprehensive medical school. But more accurately it is known as the *Rockefeller Foundation,* and so far as Leda and Jack and I are concerned it is the greatest hospital in the world. . . .

* * *

I am a person of limited outlook, and my views are, I fear, hopelessly colored by my own observations and experiences. It is the fashion nowadays to regard with cold suspicion the ethics and morals of those individuals of us who accumulate wealth. But, at the risk of being held outmoded, I consider the world to be a better place because John Davison Rockefeller lived in it. Certainly it is a better place for me. My tall boy is sunning himself yonder on the Rhode Island shore, in conversation with a young person whose brief bathing costume discloses that Jack has a sure eye for good looks. If it were not for John D. Rockefeller, I think he would not be here with us. And there are, scattered over the world, numerous fathers and mothers, black and white and brown and yellow after their kind, who will agree with me.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE OPEN FORUM

OUR CUSTOMERS DISCUSS STERILIZATION

SIR: Once more our mighty Mencken, forsaking destructive criticism and glowing with creative impulse, trumpets a definite plan for Utopia. Attend, Ye Powers! Let many males be sterilized without reference to race, color, or previous condition of servitude. But, though stated under a for-instance heading, his main thesis is that the spermatozoa of the Bible Belt, share-cropping hill-billy is well-nigh the sole cause of the flourishing state of Moronia. He holds the ova of the hill-nanny absolutely guiltless. Whether this last from gallantry or scientific differentiation is not made clear. But in support of the gallantry theory it is remarked that he does not descant on the possibility that the egg itself may be the direct and proximate cause of certain Mendelian recessives even though a biological aristocrat is *particeps criminis* in an eugenic adultery. Thumbs down on poor hill-billy Juxes, but *heil* their womenfolk in collaboration with Jonathan Edwards' seed, heirs, and assigns forever.

But Brother Mencken, suppose the mountain men should, in virtue of your laudable and benevolent plan, be rendered totally and permanently *hors de combat* for procreative purposes; suppose that the mountain women should, after a well-earned respite, conclude that their race should not take the count? Suppose, for instance, after the manner of the Greeks' Amazons, they should seek adequate sources of fertilization? Suppose they should, breathing united force, trek toward Baltimore yearning for romance with the blue-blooded blades of that celebrated city? Suppose the effete blades aforesaid should from satiety, sophisticated taste, or from lack of fecundity brought on from alcohol and high living (see "Utopia by Sterilization", by H. L. Mencken, AMERICAN MERCURY, August, 1937) decline the requested service? What then? Being rebuffed, the determined Amazons might resort to the ministrations of the smelly oyster men, and the unwashed hay-and-tomato yokels of the Old Line State. In this event, small chance for yelping Lincolns, Constantines, and William the Conquerors, don't you think?

LLOYD E. PRICE

Fort Worth,
Texas.

SIR: Mr. Mencken's article, "Utopia by Sterilization", is, as always, pungent and thought-provoking. I happen to be an employer of some thirty-three of the sharecroppers it is proposed to sterilize, about a dozen white families, and some twenty negro families. After reading Mr. Mencken's contribution, I explained the proposal to about a dozen of my negro tenants who happened to be together at the time. With the strict provision that the pleasures of the sexual relationship were in no wise to be diminished, they were unanimously in favor of the plan, at $1000 per emasculation. Said one of them, a preacher: "Gov'ment sho fixin' to spend itself a lot of money now."

However, if an increase in the sum total of human happiness is what is aimed at, then I doubt the wisdom of any sort of birth control; for surely happiness directly decreases as intelligence and complexity of mental processes increase. My sharecroppers are far happier than I. They have social security, in that they have houses to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

live in, a sure source of food, and unlimited opportunities for procreation. They want no land, because they want none of the cares and responsibilities of property ownership. Almost since time began, one-tenth of our population has thought for and directed the other nine-tenths, and I suspect this is going to continue to be true. Furthermore, this mentally inferior nine-tenths will be happier to have their thinking and direction done by others.

B. L. Moss

Soso,
Mississippi.

SIR: The extraordinary possibilities and implications of Mr. Mencken's idea of "Utopia by Sterilization" justify my asking your serious consideration of my anonymous letter. First, I take your suggestion seriously. Second, I would contribute in a fair way to a practical project for carrying out your plan. Third, I would like to suggest a secret group plan which might serve the function of your "rich philanthropist" who might not materialize.

Secret support is necessary, because the spirit of William Jennings Bryan still pervades the land to an extent which would damage most of those (who would otherwise openly support your plan) through financial and social connections. Let us assume it will be possible for you to locate a thick-hided and reputable surgeon willing to join you in public dodging of the bombshells of the righteous. The two of you, aided by small staffs and moderately supported financially by subscription, could attempt to put the scheme in operation on a trial ground. I could go along to the extent of $50 per month for at least a year. In discussion, I have located a prospect for a $50 or $100 lump contribution based on second-hand hearing of your article. Presuming your plan might actually be tried, I would suggest that anonymous potential supporters like myself be allowed to assign ourselves numbers and see printed in THE MERCURY a serial list of other potential (later actual) support. Thus, my listing: 74 ($50 mo.) if 74 is my number. If I can successfully proselyte, give me credit by listing the new members I get, 74a, 74b, etc.

Brief hunches: Pick a city rather than a rural district to start, so privacy of persons sterilized can best be guarded. A fair-sized office building on the edge of a colored section would be ideal. Keep the doctor separate, making payments in the office of a "society" on receipt of a form statement signable by any doctor, even though it will probably be necessary to plant a doctor. Age limits, 25–40.

Summing up, I hope you don't let the whole idea drop as a mere intellectual gesture. After all, regardless of how we poke fun at science and its gadgets, we have new, important and positive information regarding heredity bestowed on us by science. Admitting political and educational efforts may be doomed to failure in breaking the bonds of the Spenglerian cycles, a shot at heredity might do it. It would be worth trying. With all respect to what Mr. Mencken has accomplished as a writer along many lines, why does he not concentrate his undivided time, for at least a year or two, on this idea as a definite project?

It would be a joke on everybody if Mr. Mencken turned out to be the real Uplifter of humanity for all time. Why not?

"74"

Seattle,
Washington.

SIR: In an unorthodox manner, I would like to reply to you on the perplexing problem of birth control and eugenics which you merely scratched in your sterilization article. Being in the opposition, I'm naturally ignorant; but despite this I would like to present my views on the matter. My suggestion to round out the incomplete article on eugenics is to mention the grave possibilities contained therein, in marking cases fit for sterilization. As you no doubt agree, it would be decided to sterilize those whose scores are low in ill-devised I.Q. tests. That would be a laudable method if

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the truly undesirables were segregated into groups and then prohibited from procreating their progeny. At this point, however, I was shocked by the gross ignorance of supposed-omniscient Mencken, the one who appeared as a powerful critic and formidable foe of New Dealism. He failed to notice the weapon which he would forge for these demagogues. Doesn't his analytical brain carry him far enough in this case to realize that sterilization may become a political weapon? Some of the questions on the test could run in this vein: "Why are the alphabetical agencies created by N.D. a benefit to the nation?" "Who saved the country in 1932?" "Which party belongs to the 'pepul'?" etc., etc., to that point where even Mencken would be classed as a low grade political moron and hurriedly sterilized so that he may not bring forth Republicans and critics. Thus, if this supposition were to materialize, Mencken would be permitted to write his experience on the operating table. "How I, Mencken, Reacted to Operation" would be the caption to the article.

ED SROKA

Hammond,
Indiana.

SIR: Reading H. L. Mencken on propagation of the species, *et al.*, and enjoying his wit and cynical style and also trying to penetrate beneath wit and style to "a few plain principles and a few simple rules", I wonder if H. L.'s father shouldn't have been sterilized. That would have saved the world from something and solved at least one problem.

WILLIAM WORTHINGTON

Seattle;
Washington.

SIR: Tommy, Johnny, and Henry were bright babies. They demonstrated this by soiling their blankets ten seconds after their navels were tied. They soon learned to coo for rich milk, gypped from impoverished farmers by city sharks. They passed through the primary grades in schools furnished by the toiling masses and at the finish each recited Casabianca with tremendous effect and accordingly were counted brillant candidates for high school, which they found ready-made by the workers of the community. From here, like Columbus, they sailed on and on into the university built and equipped by farmers, sharecroppers, laborers, ditch-diggers, cottagers, industrial operatives, and artisans. They took a course in reporting and journalism because it didn't make heavy exactions on their gray ganglia and in due time secured jobs on the *Weekly Rash*. They wrote up old Mr. and Mrs. Poobah's golden wedding in such a racy style it attracted the attention of the chief of the *Daily Stooge* down in the city and from thence they became editors of a periodical known as the *Scarlet Crab*. They were then in a position to spew venom on all producers of material wealth. They had cultivated an utter contempt for the man who works with his hands, which made them eligible for the Catch'em and Skin'em Club where they absorbed mental stimulus. They now take the degree of Doctor of Snobbery.

If H. L. Mencken doesn't belong in the above category it is his fault, not mine. The picture is a candid camera of his fifty-seven years as I visualize them from his writings. He has sponged liberally on society and has returned to society infinitely less than the sharecropper whom he maligns. His income from literary effort is an indirect dole from Congress via the national copyright law. If every man has his price, which is the implication of "Utopia by Sterilization", he should quote the market on his own virility and the virtue of his household. What ill-fated star prevailed at his birth to make him a misanthrope? Perhaps he had no birth in the tradition of mortals. It is charitable to classify him as an animated afterbirth, soulless and irresponsible!

P. T. ANDERSON

Hogeland,
Montana.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BRITISH FAIR PLAY

SIR: As an Englishman I raise my British high hat to Katharine Fullerton Gerould, not for her contribution "The British Fair-Play Myth", but for her delightful courage and feminine audacity in submitting it to you. As a bit of a writer myself I have no business in your letter pages, since I object to writing for nothing, but like the gentleman who found his wife breaking the oft-forgotten commandment, I am a trifle irritated; by *Gad*, sir!

Katie knows little about logic and damn-all about the British. She says: "In spite of our (*i.e.*, American) sense of superiority to all non-Americans, we still expect the British to behave according to our notions of what is reasonable", and then adds that the sooner the illusion that John Bull and Uncle Sam belong to the same clan is lost, the better. While I have nothing but affection for the U. S. A., apart from your appalling matriarchal system, I agree with the latter part of her statement; but, in view of that, beg leave to ask why Great Britain should be expected to behave according to America's notion of what is reasonable? Does America seriously claim to be infallible in matters of reason? Or is it merely Mrs. Gerould's little feminine whim? Since we are not of the same clan it is reasonable to suppose that our definitions of reason may be dissimilar. We do not even speak the same language, as I have discovered with my shocking errors of speech from coast to coast — I hesitate to quote them lest Mrs. Gerould should charge me with indecency; but, as Sophocles or Mencken said, one lives and tries to learn.

If your contributor sincerely believes that the Edward VIII incident should be politely dropped, why does she impolitely say so much about it at this stage? The Church of England may or may not have instituted the abdication. That is beside the point, as only a comparatively small part of our populations belongs to that sect. What is significant is that the majority of the British, believing in a certain kind of Kingship as an Empire necessity, honestly felt that Edward VIII would not be doing his job properly if he married Mrs. Warfield. This majority does not care two cents now whether she calls herself H.R.H. or not. Edward VIII wisely left, failing to see eye to eye with his people and regarding his personal happiness as a human being more important than anything else.

A simple analogy is that of a married man with children (his Empire in miniature) deserting them for what he believes to be happier pastures. The basic question is whether the individual considers that he has a right to happiness regardless of any inconvenient obligations standing in his way. Judging from the high divorce rate in the U. S. A., it is clear how America reasons about that. British sportsmanship, which Mrs. Gerould is at such pains to attack, leads to reasoning in an opposite direction.

The fact that Edward VIII removed himself, or was removed (if you reason that way), shows the force of public opinion here. It is no less powerful (probably more so) than public opinion in the U. S. A., for you are able ultimately to remove your President if he fails in what you collectively reason to be his duty. And you will damn him and dissect him in your press for a long time afterwards. You may be wrong, since majorities so often are, but Kings have lost their thrones (and formerly their heads) and Presidents their pants all because their peoples reasoned collectively.

I could elaborate, but I am not getting any dollars for my time, as Mrs. Gerould undoubtedly did. Besides, I must go and dress for dinner, and as I shall not have my high hat on while I am at table I shall raise a glass to her instead and give the toast of "faraway ladies who ought to know better".

CLARENCE WINCHESTER

London,
England.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SIR: Since THE MERCURY is such an exponent of fair play I shall expect to see this in THE OPEN FORUM.

In "The British Fair-Play Myth", Katharine Fullerton Gerould states that Edward Windsor was not allowed to state his case. Edward's case was fully stated (and supported) by the powerful Rothermere and Beaverbrook press, and anyone who knows anything at all about the abdication knows this to be true. He was constantly supported by these two important publishers and in fact he still is. Young Randolph Churchill has recently gone over to one of Beaverbrook's publications in order to write anything and everything of interest concerning Edward. This young man also covered the wedding of Edward and Mrs. Warfield. Surely a publishing firm such as yours is in possession of this knowledge when every man on the street knows it. Only sheer ignorance could prompt such a statement as the one made above. It also smacks of deliberate and malicious contortion of the truth. (Incidentally, I am not a "Hinglishman" getting papers from over 'ome. I was never in England in my life and haven't a drop of English blood in my veins, but I'm a British subject.)

Stanley Baldwin had nothing to do with depriving Mrs. Warfield of the title of H.R.H. Seventy years ago, during the reign of Queen Victoria, there being so much royalty around in those days, Letters Patent were taken out by which it was decreed that the title of H.R.H. was to be used only by those related to the sovereign *in line of succession to the throne*. Is Wallis Windsor in line of succession to the throne? Not according to the abdication bill signed by Edward. After the abdication she has taken his status. He is no longer in a position to have a title of H.R.H. given to her. He is not in line of succession and neither is she.

And if Wallis Warfield had been crowned Queen of England we wouldn't hear anything about the Coronation being a "medieval mystery play". Oh, no! Then it would have been "solemn, magnificent pageantry in which American beauty plays the leading role" — "For the first time in England's history". How they love to write — "Her Grace" — "Her Grace" this, that, and the other. Rolling it off their pens. Savoring it. What a pity she was not crowned. She might have had for her trainbearers Mrs. Earl Spencer, the Second; Mrs. Earl Spencer, the Third; Mrs. Ernest Simpson, the First, assisted by a couple of her predecessors in the affections of her present husband. Perhaps Mrs. Dudley Ward and Lady Furness, to name only two. Commander Spencer and Mr. Ernest Simpson could have brought up the rear, adding a touch of *modern* pageantry to the scene. Rudy Vallee might have played in the Abbey. The Coronation coach could have been decorated with Camel ads and Johnny Walker signs. Americanize the whole thing. What a wasted opportunity!

But what is the use? You Americans are the poor sports. You can't and won't accept the fact that Wallie did not get on the throne. Not only that, but because of her and of her alone we have a really wonderful King and Queen. *And we like them.* These last four words are what really get you down.

Yours, brass-knuckly,

R. MACDONALD

Calgary, Alberta,
Canada.

SIR: Wasn't it Lord Melbourne who said of Macaulay that he wished he was as sure of anything as Macaulay was of everything? I feel that way about the author of "The British Fair-Play Myth". As to the alleged British hypocrisy of which she speaks, I refer her to the old doctrine of attainder; because Edward was in effect attainted. Attainder used to be in England the legal consequence of judgment of death or outlawry, involving forfeiture of estate, real and personal, and corruption of blood. Used extensively in feudal times, it gradually fell into disuse, though not officially abolished, I believe, until 1870. Attainder was thus a punishment meted

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out to persons convicted of treason. Nobody, of course, contends that Edward was a traitor, as defined by the Criminal Code, but there was a general feeling that he had let us down pretty badly. We felt that he was, whether consciously or not, endeavoring to destroy, with his father scarcely in the grave, the high prestige of the Crown which the late King had built up in an arduous reign of a quarter of a century. (It's no pleasure to me to say these things: I feel as though I were talking aloud in a church service — but apparently somebody has to say them.) It is difficult to explain to people who have not been born and bred in the monarchic tradition the nature of our feelings toward the Crown's prestige. I did think at the time of the late King's death that judging by your newspapers, the people of the United States had an inkling at any rate of what a good King meant. (I have been set right on that point as far as your contributor is concerned: she says bluntly that "she knows nothing about Kings".)

The nationality of Edward's wife had nothing to do with the case: there were no aspersions on her character. Nor did her rank make any difference. But she had already been twice married and had two living ex-husbands — that was all and that was plenty. Even Henry VIII never married a divorced woman.

An illustration from French history will serve me here. Six years after the death of Queen Marie Antoinette, one Count Axel Fersen was delegated by the Swedish Government to attend the Congress of Rastatt. Napoleon Bonaparte, then to all intents and purposes the ruler of France, refused to deal with him for the reason which he stated to Baron Edelsheim, "*Fersen s'est couché avec la reine*". Foe to monarchy as he was, the influence of the tradition under which he was reared showed itself in his vehement reaction. We were brought up in that same tradition: hence our reaction to the divorcee with two living ex-husbands.

As Edward refused to alter his plans, what was to be done? Obviously put it out of his power to place the woman of his choice on the Throne. How? By the method of attainder — forfeiture of estate and corruption of blood, the latter involving as a necessary corollary that his wife be not ennobled by marriage. How does fair play come into the picture when a sentence has been passed? What other penalty meets the case? Do we speak of a judge who imposes a sentence as a hypocrite for so doing? Questions of hypocrisy and fair play have as little to do with the case as the second law of thermodynamics.

W. P. MACKAY

Simcoe, Ontario,
Canada.

SIR: For sheer ignorance of affairs British, contempt for things Christian, and relish for the spirit of discord, one would not need to search further than the article in your August issue by Katharine Fullerton Gerould.

Only antipathy for a Christian moral standard could lead the writer to attack the Archbishop of Canterbury for doing his Christian duty; and only sectarian schoolbook learning could inspire her to say that English dissenters are taxed to support the Church of England — an allegation without a vestige of truth in it.

From several other articles in the same issue, I should say that MERCURY dips rather low just now.

THOMAS JENKINS

Reno,
Nevada.

SIR: Having visited thirty-four States of the Union, we are now on our return journey to England. My wife is an American citizen while I hail from Sydney, Australia, and therefore we are not English but absolutely neutral. We both like America immensely and are, therefore, at the eleventh hour, dismayed to read an article in your very fine publication, leaving us with a nasty taste. I refer to "The British Fair-Play Myth".

We, as pro-Americans, if anything, feel

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that not only is it a great pity that such incorrect information should be panhandled, but also the fact that your fine journal should see fit to publish such an article, which even supposing it were true, can hardly be calculated to foster friendship. Today, with Hitlerism, Fascism, Bolshevism, and the Yellow Peril so close at hand, is it not imperative for all British and American people, all who speak the English tongue, to shelve their troubles and unite in a common front to protect our shores?

KILIAN E. BENSUSON

S.S. Queen Mary,
At Sea.

SIR: Hurrah for Katharine Fullerton Gerould and her article, "The British Fair-Play Myth". Well done and not one whit overdone. Echo! Echo!! Echo!!!

CHRISTINE MEEK

Garden City,
New York.

FOND OF CHILDREN

SIR: The unfortunate mother who wrote the purposeless article, "I Do Not Like My Children", is surely a sad parent, despite her contrary testimony. She deserves the community's most abject sympathy and pity as do many other such unfortunate parents. As the father of a sixteen-year-old girl, I desire to express very briefly my observations on children, gleaned at home and abroad. There have been occasions when I could have willingly unlimbered my ex-service Colt and done bodily injury to or dispatched our young hopeful. But after the passing of these brief emotional spasms, it usually became clear that the cause of her difficulty often was not an inherent weakness but an implanted one for which we parents were responsible. For example, superprimping before mirrors and shop windows; this is the direct result of an overemphasis by one of us, her mother perhaps, on the subject of dress, style, and appearance. Gradually this and other weaknesses are being corrected by her mother and me in agreeing to train her effectively in mental balance.

Our reading and our experiences have demonstrated the horrible results of the sacrifice of children by the parents and daily impress us with our duty to our daughter and our protection to ourselves. I am convinced that our children, be they rascals or angels, are the products of our handiwork and, when they turn out not to our liking, we have failed most miserably in fully meeting society's most sacred moral obligation.

ANONYMOUS FATHER

California.

SIR: By this time you must have hundreds of letters protesting the article "I Do Not Like My Children" by A Mother in the August issue. May I add my little two cents' worth!

Either this mother is a mentally sick woman who should be pitied rather than condemned or else she realizes she has been a flat failure as a mother and is easing her conscience by admitting it indirectly, but if so, why blame it on her children? The very title of her article admits defeat on the bringing up of her family. I, too, am a mother and I do like my children.

MARY W. BARTON

Amsterdam,
New York.

SIR: There is just one remark to be made about August's Little-Mother-Who-Likes-Not-Her-Children. Did she ever hear of a thing called environment and heredity, and is she herself faultless or lacking in idiosyncrasy?

Your magazine, and I do not say this lightly, is one of the two best now published in the country (the other is *Fortune*). I read each issue from cover to cover, and dwell on your excellent Mr. Nock. May his audience grow.

ROGER PAUL GEIGER

New York City.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SIR: I hope the anonymous article "I Do Not Like My Children", is a hoax. I have no sentimental, Hollywood attitude toward motherhood, nor do I consider it every woman's right to "express herself" (whatever that means) by having a child. But I do stand aghast at any woman intelligent enough to see people as objectively as this author sees her children, but stupid enough not to know that she is at least seventy-five per cent responsible for their personalities.

She says they are "not fundamentally generous, appreciative, stimulating, responsive, necessary — to me"; not one of those qualities is part of their biological inheritance and therefore out of her control. Every one of them is dependent on environment, and any woman not willing to make herself three-quarters responsible for the environment of her children's earliest (and most impressionable) years, has no business to have children.

It is hard to see how the writer herself can have a personality which makes her so attractive as she seems to think to her husband and friends, now that her children are lucky enough to have escaped her vicinity. If the article really is genuine, one hopes that the children realize what poor service their mother has done them.

HELEN MONTAGUE MILLER

Wellesley Hills,
Massachusetts.

SIR: Our mother cat gave birth to six kittens. She wasn't a writer so we never knew why she ate them up. Perhaps she just wanted to be alone. Anyway we couldn't stand her around after that and put her under a washtub with ten cents worth of chloroform.

That was before we read Mencken's article, "Utopia by Sterilization". He's really got something there. Too bad he's too late to catch the author of "I Do Not Like My Children", but I'll buy the chloroform if someone will hold the tub down.

RUTH H. LANE

Los Angeles,
California.

OPEN FORUM PERSONALS

SIR: On glancing through your July issue I happened to read a letter in THE OPEN FORUM from a Mr. Paul S. Singer, who deplored in no uncertain terms the fact that THE AMERICAN MERCURY is "a magazine of stubborn, arrogant opinion" because it chooses to print articles that have a definite viewpoint which the authors maintain throughout. Mr. Singer advised you to read Dale Carnegie's book on influencing people and by so doing to learn how to handle them. On the very strength of this advice Mr. Singer shows himself to be a man who probably has not been able to handle even his office boy and therefore has allied himself with Dale Carnegie as a last hope of salvation for his battered ego.

I have tried hard to imagine what type of magazine would appeal to Mr. Singer. No doubt it would be one which adheres so closely to "the norm of literature" that it says almost nothing and proves even less — a few facts, perhaps, provided they be unquestionable, but aside from that mere padding of the most inconsequential kind. It is a pity that Mr. Singer does not realize that the true zest of reading comes from the intellectual conflicts it arouses, wherein the author states one side of the case and attempts to prove his point, and the reader forms his own opinion. Yet your honorable detractor, Mr. Singer, would do away with this intellectual adventure. Let me suggest to him the dictionary, which affords a chance for some nice factual, un-opinionated reading.

I see that Mr. Singer used the words "arrogant" and "moron" twice in his contribution. It is gratifying to note that he is conversant with two words which so typify his letter.

NORMAN G. HICKMAN

New York City.

SIR: That "pellucid" Harvard thinker, L. Foster, who congratulates you on your editorial sanity during "this hapless era",

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should learn the score himself — instead of trying to prescribe for all America from his sacrosanct study. Toryism is expected and forgivable in Mr. Mencken and in THE MERCURY. But it is painful to see in Harvard lame-brains. Mr. Foster had better join the secession of Maine and Vermont or else learn what the hell is abroad in the America of 1937.

BERKELEY J. STANFORD

El Endino,
California.

SHERMAN STILL MARCHES

SIR: I gather from the article, "Why the South Hates Sherman", that the author's principal peeve is double-barreled, consisting of two Southern gals who lately have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize, one of them also setting something of a record, I believe, in the matter of book sales. This must be awfully, awfully tough for you fellows north of the Smith & Wesson Line. Me, I'm a dam' Yankee myself, born in Chicago; and the uncle for whom I was named, Captain Oscar Fitz-Allen Bane, was an officer (we had a few officers in the North, too) in the 123rd Illinois, Wilder's Brigade, Sherman's Army, and assisted in the devastation referred to as the March in your piece. I had many conversations with him, but he never let me in on any Army gossip to the effect that W. T. was in any way pedagogical. The Old Man, considered the boys, was out to win a war by making the other side sick of it, which remains a sound war policy, I believe. However, it may be easier to laugh off a Myth than a Best-Seller, especially for a chap specializing in disgruntling at so much (but not so much) a disgruntle.

Some way, living in the South nearly half a century, I've never heard a whole lot about the erstwhile quality down heah, suh; and while I see little of the sharecroppers and the rugged mountaineers (with hairy ears) I like them a lot better than the tenementeers of the East Side of New York whose modern apartments occasionally fall in on them.

Hoping you are the same — as you doubtless always will be — I am

Cordially yours,

O. B. KEELER

Atlanta,
Georgia.

SIR: If in 1918, General Sherman could have returned from — I believe it was Texas he rented out — and seen some of the destruction in Picardy, like Lord Clive he might indeed have been "astonished at his own moderation" in his March Through Georgia.

Mr. Peveral H. Peake says Sherman taught the South to think. In that case it's now up to some good Southerner to teach Mr. Peake to do less thinking and more studying of facts.

C. C. PINCKNEY

Birmingham,
Alabama.

SIR: In "Why the South Hates Sherman" the author has only said what I have wanted to say for many years. I am not a journalist so nobody would pay any attention to me. And there was another tendency which has been a subtle influence to destroy the effectiveness of the South. It was teaching them they were gentlemen and should not work. I have heard a great deal about Southern chivalry and I can assure you that the article is an interesting and truthful one. I am sorry more of the *Gone With the Wind* readers haven't had a chance to read more stories of the South and more particularly of the war. My father came from England after the Civil War. I should be pro-South. I am pro-nothing, but I think a sensible article like yours clears away the cobwebs.

C. L. HORN

Minneapolis,
Minnesota.

SIR: The author of "Why the South Hates Sherman" inserted the query whether

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

General Sherman's use of the words "Talk thus to the marines" was the origin of the expression. According to the *New English Dictionary* (VI, 164), the first record of the expression is in Byron's *Island* (II, xxi) in 1823: "Right," quoth Ben, "that will do for the marines." A note explains: " 'That will do for the marines, but the sailors won't believe it', is an old saying." Other early records are in Scott's *Red-Gauntlet* (Ch. 23) in 1824 and in Jerrold's *Black-Ey'd Susan* (Act I, near end of Scene V) in 1829.

PAUL P. KIES
Department of English,
Washington State College.
Pullman,
Washington.

SIR: This evening there came to my door the August issue of the ever delightful MERCURY. "Ah!" I exclaim, "my admired Mencken!" "This," said I, "I shall read in the still hours of the night while Dixie's feather-like dew is falling on moon-kissed green velvet lawns, and after that last furlong through the sunflowered path of necessity where I shall sit for the nonce gazing through the crescent-shaped aperture at the star-studded sapphire sky, all the while dwelling on the frustration that has undoubtedly been the lot of that son of Revere Beach who wrote 'Why the South Hates Sherman'."

Breaking my thought chain I shall sigh hopelessly as the torn pieces of Peveral Peake's prose flutter downward through stygian darkness to be refused in the end the companionship of pages from an honest mail-order catalogue.

COL. H. JAMESON MOONEY, C.S.A.
Memphis,
Tennessee.

SEX, AGAIN

SIR: Since reading "I Believe in the Double Standard", I've been plagued with the temptation to write a reply to "A Wife". Careful culling of the subsequent correspondence discovered a not-unexpected fact: pro-wife supporters were male, while the antagonists were predominantly female. The husbands praised and applauded; the wives defended monogamy in furious counter-attack. As a normal, well-sexed male, I'd like to state my personal and professional reactions and only regret that I can't find words sufficiently devastating to portray my utter disgust of the fallaciousness of the authoress's reasoning.

As a physician, I spent some time with one of our better-known psychiatrists doing special study on the sexual problem. Having, during that period, interviewed hundreds of sexual misfits and their intimates, I realize that sex is indubitably a problem. In a few exceptional cases, extra-marital amorous adventures could be condoned on the grounds that the wives of these men had been committed to mental hospitals or were hopeless invalids. In such extreme instances, a man can be allowed some latitude in his personal life. But, when a wife is normal in her physical and mental qualities and is well-balanced sexually, she has in her power sufficient stamina to serve more than one well-sexed male. "A Wife" complains that no one woman can "handle this extravagant energy" and assumes that the male libido evolves from the "billions of boisterous spermatozoa constantly clamoring for release". Where she received this information is of no concern: important is the fact that it is erroneous. Male desire rises primarily from the prostate gland and seminal vesicles, when these organs become distended by their own internal secretions. The spermatozoa arise in the testes and, being transmitted to the afore-mentioned glands by means of the *vas deferens,* become "passengers" in the fluids of these organs. Evolution, ever prolific, has provided man with billions of spermatozoa, not to make a sexual athlete of him, but to give a better chance for one of the myriad male germ-cells to contact the single female cell which is liberated monthly at ovulation.

"A Wife" smugly prates of "surprises and diversions" which her male proudly brings

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

home to her. She fails utterly to realize that these "surprises and diversions" are being enjoyed by thousands of happily-married couples without necessitating any "post-graduate" work on the part of the husbands. By modern, liberated psychologists these things are considered as quite normal and decent. She succeeds in clothing them with the air of hushed secrecy generally reserved for the illicit and abnormal.

Quite naïvely, "A Wife" admits having all that it takes to hold a man yet she confesses to failure. To explain her lack of success, she rationalizes to the extent that she childishly convinces herself that she is not to blame. Her ratiocination allows her to avoid the responsibility and blames Nature for compelling her man to cheapen himself and her by his extra-marital interludes. In this case, it would seem that not only has she failed but her husband is very immature, sensually. Neither of them seem to appreciate that that which is common cannot be beautiful or soul-satisfying. To be as physical as this husband seems to be is to sacrifice the most important feature of the sex-relationship; namely, the psychological aspect.

Her answer to the question of venereal disease is pathetically ludicrous. She blithely announces that "nice girls" are not averse to a little erotic adventure and that men no longer need to resort to red-light districts. In making this statement she seems to suggest that "nice girls" are immune to social diseases. Is it not more sensible to assume that prostitutes are more aware of social diseases and their prevention than the dilettantes? Yet, two-thirds of all prostitutes show positive Wasserman reactions. It is true that diseased men aren't as likely to consort with "nice girls", but this class of females has by no means a clean medical record. Syphilis and gonorrhea know no social boundaries. Friend husband, for all his worldliness and medical knowledge, may yet surprise "A Wife" with an unexpected present!

In future generations, problems of this nature will undoubtedly be absent because of more intelligent sex education. From the present revolution in morals resulting from our changing economic standards, we can expect a more enlightened attitude toward this all-important problem of marriage. In the meantime, the world will be full of blundering couples who are as misguided as your "child-authoress" and her "delightful child-husband". May they well enjoy their smartness and modernity before the flimsy superstructure topples around their thoughtless heads.

DR. D. V. J.

Philadelphia.

SIR: I think you are right in sponsoring the discussion provoked by "I Believe in the Double Standard". Although sexual intercourse is the highest expression of love known to man, whereby we are even given the supernatural privilege of creating a soul, Man has sadly abused this Gift of Gifts. I mean Man and Woman jointly, by establishing such as the Double Standard. Woman has belittled herself by her simpering and denial of urges that are both holy and healthy — and yes, enjoyable. Again, by her hypocrisy, so-called pure woman has not been able to enjoy the love of man, thereby sinning against her health, as sexual repressions induce many neurotic complaints. Admittedly, man sold her on these ideas, because quick to sense sexual enjoyment, he was selfish enough to keep the entire pleasure of it from his mate, in order that he might have more than his share. And the fallacy was started that polygamy was essential to men. He often violated that which was not his and the "good" woman belittled herself and her sex by acquiescence to his lordly rule and looking down upon his extra companions. And what has the roving of man brought him? Nothing, only discontent. In the first place, man has no more right to polygamy than woman, and successful intercourse cannot be achieved in a succession of polygamous unions.

The successful "art of intercourse" can be achieved only by habit, effort, affection, and real understanding between both parties.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is what marriage is for. True, it requires time, but a real love-mating can accomplish it. In fact, only through the mediums of habit, affection, and understanding can stimulating, satisfying intercourse be achieved. Anyone can have an episode and what is it worth? Nothing, usually. More often than not it results in disgust due to improper knowledge of the physical habits of the parties — mere animal passion and insufficient interest in the well-being of either party. Why not reverse this order and use this gift in its finest sense? To promote our general health, to improve our daily work, sharpen our mentality and strengthen our ambitions. Used rightly, it will do all and more. Experience has shown that when the sex life is harmonious, all else is. No really intelligent woman is ashamed of normal physical desires. Men should take women off the stifling narrowness of the pedestals and let them become real partners in every sense of the word.

(Miss) Elliot Lynch

Glens Falls,
New York.

Sir: I have read and reread the letter signed "A Fond Foolish Female" in your Open Forum, concerning the Double Standard. Being a wife who has experienced a little of the tactics of this "Fond Foolish Female", I would like to voice my opinions.

Why is it a single girl thinks she has the right even to dare share a married man's love and life after he and his wife have sacrificed in many ways? Perhaps brought children into the world, suffered misfortunes and griefs together, and then at the height of his career after success has made him alluring, let some little Miss Tompkins come into his life and flatter and pamper him. Then to think she would even dare to think she was playing second fiddle. What do you suppose the wife thinks? Doesn't she have first possession of her husband? She probably knows it and is putting up a heroic fight, as much of a fight as if fought on any battlefield to gain her beloved again. Then this little silly girl thinks it is right to have an affair like that.

All I can say is some day I hope her heart aches as much as that wife's heart must ache and I hope she gets the just rewards of her adventure. Maybe she will see the folly of it all when she is a wife and mother and some baby doll comes and does the same thing to her. Or maybe it will be when her daughter faces the same situation.

Why are such girls placed in the world? They make devoted loving wives suffer a thousand deaths while they are enjoying something they think is theirs. From her wonderful lineage and college education, that divine spark of right and wrong is sadly missing. When it is repaid she will realize there should be no Double Standard. If God had wanted one he would have provided for one.

From a Wife Who Has Suffered

———.

Sir: For ten years I have taught a course in this institution on "The Family", and I have read rather faithfully all the leading magazine articles dealing with problems in the field of the family and also the new books on this subject, and have also attended numerous national conferences where these problems were discussed, so I am not a prude nor an uninformed person in this field. Yet I am most vigorously protesting against your article, "The Dangers of Sexual Abstinence".

There is much that might be said against this article and you already know this without being told. Many of the views expressed are untrue and can be refuted by the best medical authority. We have no fault to find with being frank in these matters but the very title of the article, and the view taken that the cost and danger in avoiding sex relations before marriage is greater than the cost and danger of giving these impulses satisfaction in pre-marital relations, are vicious. The whole article constitutes an appeal to the inexperience, impulsiveness, and curiosity of youth to enter such sex relations. The article really invites and attempts

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to justify our youth doing the very thing that parental efforts, institutional education of church and school, and social and statutory law everywhere throughout our land are trying to prevent. The article is vicious, brazen, and contradictory to the best teachings of educational and medical authorities.

You owe an apology to your readers.

M. R. THOMPSON
Head, Dept. of Soc. Science,
Iowa State Teachers College.

Cedar Falls,
Iowa.

SIR: Dr. Hirsch's "The Dangers of Sexual Abstinence", despite its manifest intellectual astuteness, presents nothing new nor does it offer a real solution to the problem it raises. The highwater mark of the whole article is found in these words: "They (young folks) should be taught that the sexual force stimulates the creative urge and all forms of ennobling activity". But this truism can be said about almost anything from dynamite to money, not to mention sex. Sex in itself is neither good nor bad; it depends under what ethic it is made to function. Ostensibly, sex, like dynamite or money, can be turned to uses good or bad, or purposes high or low.

While Dr. Hirsch did mildly disapprove of promiscuity, a thing which even savages did, he did write in such a tone and quality as might lead to promiscuity by young folks not any too well informed or educated in the matter. He seems to breathe out the same air now so prevalent against modesty and abstinence over the whole country. The cure is worse than the disease, it seems. I do not believe that this country is afflicted with abstinence nearly as much as it is with indulgence. If Dr. Hirsch decries the high cost of abstinence and its psychic desecration of the personality, let him remember that indulgence costs ten-fold. Of the two evils, under present circumstances, abstinence is by far the lesser and by far the less baneful to society at large. The real solution of the sex problem is self-control and not self-indulgence, and it is this lesson we have yet to learn.

P. BRINKMAN, JR.

Portland,
Oregon.

PREFERS THE GRAVE

SIR: Our friend who wrote in the July issue about Cremation hinted at gruesome details, but left much unsaid. Our imagination pictures the horror of the corpse's eyeballs bursting from the intense heat, the pitiful brief blaze caused by the hair, the face degenerating into a horrible simulacrum of a human countenance, and the burning clothing dropping in shreds from a nude body which writhes during its disintegration as if alive and in torment. We cannot regard this sight, even with our mind's eye, without the mournful thought that what we see before us was once somebody's dear one; that this poor food for the flames once loved and was loved.

As for me, after the embalmers are done with me, I hope to find my last resting place in the good clean earth from which we all sprang.

E. J. SHENEMAN

New York City.

RED, WHITE, AND SPAIN

SIR: As a keen and impartial observer of the Spanish situation — impartial because Fascism, Nazi-ism, Communism, and Socialism all find disfavor in my eyes — and as a devout reader of dozens of American newspapers and periodicals among which is the New York *Times,* I read the article "Propaganda from Spain" with great interest. However, why crucify such a noble institution as the New York *Times* for its news treatment of the Spanish war, especially in accenting Nazi and Fascist aid to the rebels? Is it not one of the basic policies of a news organization to feature the most important phase of a story truthfully? The *Times* has been presenting its war news as honestly and as completely as the strict foreign cen-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorship will allow. The Fascist aid factor is doubtlessly the most important aspect of the Spanish situation since it is prolonging a war which normally, in its original guise of a mere civil war, should have ended several months ago with the government's suppressing the rebel faction, and Spain would today once again be a normal, peaceful nation instead of being torn to shreds for the greedy desires of two powerful dictators — representing Nazi-ism and Fascism.

In a nutshell the situation stacks up somewhat like this — the Loyalists who no doubt possess certain Communistic tendencies which are no worse than the destructive principles of Nazi-ism, are fighting to preserve the integrity of historic old Spain, and with this incentive are putting on an heroic stand against overwhelming odds caused only by the German- and Italian-controlled Franco forces.

"Propaganda from Spain" was unjustly critical towards a newspaper which is now an important American institution and whose integrity is seldom questioned. Therefore please accept the above as a contrasting opinion to Mr. Pratt's article.

JOEL GEE.

Tucson,
Arizona.

SIR: Both THE AMERICAN MERCURY and Mr. Fletcher Pratt deserve praise for the timely and courageous publication of the partisan reporting of the current Spanish civil war in most of the American press. It comes as a breath of fresh air amid the nauseating fumes of Red propaganda which we are fed as "news". As a Reserve Officer, I have clipped the story daily from representative American papers and foreign sources and plotted the gains and losses upon special large-scale maps, because I have been interested in the military campaign and the lessons to be drawn therefrom. It was early evident, as early as August, 1936, that the Red dispatches could not be relied upon, for often during "advances" the succeeding day's victory took place in the rear of the Red's former front line.

Mr. Pratt points out the sins of omission and commission of the New York *Times;* his indictment is overwhelming and unanswerable. But it might be said that the *Times* is, in Mr. Pratt's graphic phrase, prejudiced for "racial and sectarian reasons". The New York *Herald Tribune* has no such excuse; its sins have been equally glaring. Nor can the papers throw the blame upon the censor nor upon the press associations. The Havana papers carry the story sent by the same press associations, through the censor: the difference is striking and somewhat shameful to our journalists.

But the chief victim of newspaper falsity is not General Franco; it is the American people. Communistic doctrines are being forced down their throats, Communism and all its vile allies are being made respectable, their way to power is being smoothed by newspapers that betray their trust. Lenin said in his testament, "after Russia, Spain". The Third International does not cease in the Iberian peninsula, not when the door here is opened wide by the most influential organs of American public opinion.

The Loyalists have recently commemorated the first anniversary of the Civil War with great rejoicing and festivities, because of their overwhelming daily victories. A recapitulation of Loyalist communiqués and Red news would show that General Franco has lost: 6000 field guns, 13,400 airplanes, 80,000 automobiles, and 2,600,000 men; and that General Miaja's Loyalist forces have conquered a territory twice as large as both Spain and Morocco combined, and captured: Cordoba — 5 times; Zaragoza — 9 times; Toledo — 16 times; Oviedo — 20 times; Huesca — 33 times. Not even an infinitesimal part of the foregoing statistics are true. On the contrary the actual truth is that the greatest losses suffered by the Nationalists at the hands of the Loyalists are: 11 bishops and 17,000 priests murdered by the Reds; and 25,000 sympathizers of General Franco in Valencia, 50,000 in Bar-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

celona, and 60,000 in Madrid, all "liquidated" in true Soviet style.

The further truth is that the Nationalists, not the Reds, have captured hundreds of towns and villages in addition to several Provincial Capitals and other important cities such as Irún, Pasajes, San Sebastian, Mérida, Badajoz, Toledo, Malaga, Bilbao, and many more too numerous to mention, while the Reds, not the Nationalists, have lost them, without in turn conquering a single town of importance. Today, of the fifty Provincial Capitals comprising Spain, the Nationalists control thirty-five against fifteen in the hands of the Reds. Spain's territory covers 504,776 square kilometers, of which Franco controls 63 per cent, and the Reds only 37 per cent. At the above rate of victories the Loyalists will be compelled to flee Spain and to commemorate in Russia the second anniversary of the Civil War. And they will be optimistic enough to think that they are still in Spain and masters of the country!

As you have undoubtedly noticed, the Red officials and their sympathizers follow Nikolai Lenin, who advised his American disciples, as to their "duty" in the following words: ". . . if necessary, to practice trickery, to employ cunning, and to resort to illegal methods . . . to sometimes even overlook or conceal the truth. . . ."

The Loyalists' attempt to deceive is obvious to fair minds. Having no victories of their own to celebrate, they are in truth commemorating the victorious march of Nationalism under General Franco.

JOHN EOGHAN KELLY

Jersey City,
New Jersey.

OUR CONSTITUTION

SIR: I have been abused, kicked upon, mistreated, and bitten, ever since you published my Amendment to the New Deal Constitution. I was under the impression that few of my New Deal acquaintances (friends no longer) read THE MERCURY, and allowed you to publish my letter without injunction, indeed, with a rather complacent expression upon my erstwhile humble countenance. But, *mirabile dictu,* one of them read it, and passed it around. Six went together to purchase a copy, and read with flowing tears and quivering voices. Hereafter, my name is Cassandra.

Now that I do stop to think about it, I wonder how I can be so utterly ungrateful. After all, the New Deal has given us Social Security, and takes only a mere dollar or less from my check every month. What have I against the More Abundant Socially Secure Life? I pay no income tax, having little income, and therefore need fear no opprobrious cries of "Tax-Dodger" as I make my unmolesting way down the main thoroughfare of our Capitol City. I am not a Supreme Court Justice in danger of being shoved off my high bench for the crime of being past three-score and ten or fifteen, nor Senator perspiring under the humidity, not the heat, of Washington in July. In fact, I almost got a job about two years ago under this very New Deal, only they looked up my registration. Their beneficent Labor Laws would prevent me from working over forty hours a week, if I were under twenty-one, if I worked that much anyway.

Altogether, I am an ungrateful wretch. When I count my blessings o'er, not excluding that of hearing Dr. Roosevelt's velvet voice almost any time on my antique radio, I'm overcome with remorse. But the awful fact remains: The reason why, I cannot tell, I do not like the great New Deal.

CASSANDRA

Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania.

ORCHIDS

SIR: Several years ago I used to read THE AMERICAN MERCURY at the library, being in no position to buy it. I admired your magazine very much then, with its exceptional short stories and articles. Politics was not given a great deal of space, perhaps an article or so. How about today? Each month your magazine contains some five or

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

six articles knocking the Administration. There may be a short story and perhaps one or two articles dealing with something other than comparing the President's Administration to a Communist purge. A stranger upon reading your magazine would consider it nothing more than an organ for the Republican Party instead of a magazine of culture.

If you were to go back and use the material you used to use, with stories by some good writers, I feel sure that you would have a great many more readers. I have conversed with many regarding your magazine, including some college professors, and they feel the same as I do. And if you must have politics in it, an editorial can take care of the whole thing each month. With such a policy, I would be the first to renew my subscription to THE AMERICAN MERCURY. I wonder how many of your present readers feel that way. Let's have a magazine of culture and art in place of a propaganda periodical, god-damning this and that and the other thing, without suggesting remedies.

JOSEPH GOLDFINE

Superior,
Wisconsin.

SIR: For some months I have been an avid reader of THE MERCURY. I like it. I like its fearlessness. I like the way Albert Jay Nock strips the shame of patriotism and altruism from Roosevelt. I like the fearless way in which the writer of "Revolution in Michigan" tells the truth about the unions, and your article about the so-called "Civil Liberties Union" was a whizz-dinger. And explaining it all is the one by Pollock: "America Doesn't Give Damn".

Keep up the good work and give more articles like those mentioned.

L. A. SHAW

Enid,
Oklahoma.

SIR: I am a Democrat, iconoclast, and rebel. I am patient, tolerant, and sympathetic. I have experienced defeat and frustration, but not at the forfeiture of faith or as an occasion for retreat. At present I am sick, weary, and nauseated — almost ready to implore, "Good Lord, have mercy on us poor miserable sinners, for there is not a prophet left in Israel who seems to know or understand!" But I am cheered. My compliments to the author of "America's Wet-Nurse Bureaucracy" for the production, and congratulations to you for the publicity. I wish there were some way to put it in the mail box of every American elector — in pamphlet form.

T. A. HAVRON

Nashville,
Tennessee.

A FISH STORY

SIR: I don't know whether an editor has any right to send a letter to himself in care of his own OPEN FORUM. But I have a question that I think some of the OPEN FORUM readers — particularly those living on the Pacific Coast — may be able to answer. And I can't find the answer anywhere else.

At various times I have caught, in the waters of Puget Sound, a fish which I have always called a *salmon trout.* It weighs from a pound to two pounds and is caught by trolling with a spoon. It lives, as far as I know, only in salt water. Its flesh is red or pink and it is the best eating fish I have ever tasted in my life. I am trying to find out what the real name of this fish is. The purpose of my inquiry is to satisfy my curiosity, and also to enable me to make arrangements for ordering some of these delicacies from Coast shippers from time to time.

I queried Mr. Stewart Holbrook, the gifted MERCURY contributor who lives in Portland, Oregon, about the matter, and he referred the problem to the Hon. Mike Hoy, Master Fish Warden for the State. Mr. Hoy passed the buck to Mr. Oscar Wirkkala of the Columbia River Packers Association and he, with wonderful generosity, shipped me four sockeye salmon, caught near Astoria

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the lower Columbia River. These fish were delicious and I devoured them with heartfelt appreciation. But they were not my "salmon trout". They weighed about four pounds apiece, whereas the fish I refer to rarely passes two pounds.

Those are the facts in this very unimportant case. Any readers of THE OPEN FORUM who can help me identify the fish to which I refer will be doing this magazine a great gustatory favor.

PAUL PALMER

Ridgefield,
Connecticut.

A RETAILER EXPLAINS

SIR: I am a retailer. I believe in retailing and its future. I believe the article, "Only Saps Pay Retail Prices", was extremely unfair to the nation's largest single industry, which gives gainful employment to an average of 2,703,325 people and part-time employment to an average of 730,327, with a total payroll of $2,910,445,000. This industry, for all its importance, is largely inarticulate, and because of this, it is little understood by the vast majority of consumers.

Let us assume that you have paid a dollar for a pair of silk stockings. Where did each penny of that dollar go? How much was profit to the store, and was that profit excessive? If you wish to follow this explanation easily, place 100 pennies on your desk.

Now take sixty-five cents from the dollar. This represents what the merchant paid the manufacturer, or the wholesaler, for the stockings. In other words, when the merchant buys 100 pairs, he must sell sixty-five before he has paid the bare cost of merchandise. Take away an additional three cents to represent freight and cartage involved in getting the hosiery to the store. Another cent will be lost through theft or shortage.

Of the thirty-one coins left, twelve will go for salaries. Three will go for advertising and display. Another three, or even more when the burden of Social Security taxes is placed upon retailing, will go for taxes and rent. Two cents will provide supplies and repairs; one cent will cover miscellaneous expenses. In all, ninety cents have been used for unavoidable and essential expenses. In other words, ninety items must be sold out of the original 100 before a penny is left for profit.

What about mark-downs? The average retail store has about ten per cent mark-downs, leaving no profit at all. The larger stores, however, are more fortunate and show mark-downs of about three per cent. Taking that figure, there is but seven cents left for net profit.

There you have the elements that go to make up the price of everything you buy at retail. If the agencies and wholesalers who sell at prices below the retailers' were to expand their business and, as Hannah Lees suggests in her article, "drive the other (legitimate retailing) out of business", they will have the very same expenses to pay and will have to raise their prices to include the items which the retailer must consider. The only possible way to cut expenses would be to lower the items mentioned in the foregoing explanation.

It seems unlikely that the sixty-five cents which the article cost can be much reduced. The three cents for rent and taxes is likewise inflexible. Light and heat would still take one cent at least. Repairs and supplies cannot be done without. So where can the saving be made?

Perhaps by eliminating all local charities and all store services, miscellaneous expenses might be reduced from one cent to one-half cent. By eliminating as many employees as possible, the twelve cents for wages might be cut considerably. But this would be a doubtful saving, for the millions of men and women who support themselves through employment in retail stores could not find jobs in a world where there are already too many jobless. That leaves us the three cents spent for advertising and display. This the retail establishment might drop if necessary; but what of the newspapers and magazines? What of the radio and the print-shops? Your newspaper would no longer cost three

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cents, but perhaps ten or fifteen cents. If wholesalers took over the burden of advertising expense, it would still be paid for by the consumer, wherever and however he bought the merchandise.

WILMER EDGAR BREESE

Oneonta,
New York.

FOREIGNERS

SIR: As a reader of THE MERCURY from its very birth, I have often wondered by what magical tricks certain articles reached your pages, especially — as I am told — since they are paid for. In the present case I refer to "Why Become A Citizen?" by Don Layne. If Mr. Layne had paid more attention to facts he might have found out what the despicable foreigners of whom he complains have meant to "his" country and the government whose destruction he so nervously fears. But why call up the ghosts of Lafayette, Hamilton, John Paul Jones, and the thousands of sailors who manned our ships from the Revolutionary to the Spanish-American War, rarely bothering themselves about citizenship?

Why refer to the Japanese who grow our vegetables and fruit on the Pacific slope, the Slovaks, Poles, Bulgarians, and Belgians who sweat and die in Pennsylvania mines and steel plants, the hosts of Italians who dig our sewers and tunnels, and last but not least the docile Chink who for so many years was the only one whose bony hands made it possible for even the author of a magazine article to put a clean shirt upon his back? Mr. Layne is much concerned over some 500,000 foreigners who entered this country illegally. But who gave permission and visas to the Pilgrims, the New York Dutch, the ancestors of the Washingtons, the Franklins, the Wilsons, and the Roosevelts? I do not recall that they swore allegiance to the Indians on arrival.

Mr. Layne makes a great fuss about foreigners refusing to swear allegiance to a government that is constantly under fire for questionable activities. Allegiance to the New Deal is not a pill easy for an honest, self-respecting man to swallow. Why should he go through the hocus-pocus performance of swearing allegiance — an indignity which is not demanded of a native? After all, the glorious blessings of American citizenship — a legend fabricated for the edification of school boys — is today the ridicule of all the civilized world. It is better to be a foreigner, and be treated as a guest and friend, in this benighted republic today. I quote from an unabridged Eskimo dictionary:

"A Foreigner is a man from other shores who has left his home and friends and has come to trade his goods with ours.

"A Native is a thing like a salmon egg; just spawned here, it could not help it and does not know why or what for. An accident."

A COSMOPOLITAN

Seattle,
Washington.

THREATENING LETTER DEP'T.

SIR: I have been reading your Mercrey Magazine for some time and I think you are decreaseing its value by letting such people as that would be writer Albert J. Nock write such abuseive terms against President Roosevelt. You can tell him for me that he better wake up to the fact that he is talking about the President of United States not one of the same type as himself. Tell him also if he was asked to prove it he might be placed in an embarrising situation. I am a strong Democrat and 100% for Frankling D. Roosevelt. I havent any hard feelings against Mr. Nock Pearsonally but he cant get away with saying such things about President Roosevelt. Also I have several friends who are going to quit your publications if you allow such slander against the President to be published.

Yours Plenty Sore,
THOMAS J. MCCORMICK

Billings,
Montana.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

– BECAUSE CENTER TRACTION MEANS SAFETY!

ALL roads will be happy roads if you ride on Goodyear Tires. They'll be safe roads, in fair weather or foul, because Goodyears give you the matchless protection of traction in the CENTER of the tread!

That is where you need it most—the one place tires must have *grip.* Look what Goodyear builds there—sturdy, deep-cut, sharp-edged diamonds that "bite" and hold on any surface, resist skidding in any direction. *More than 8,000 tests prove this Goodyear center-grip will stop your car quickest!*

All Goodyear Tires, irrespective of price class, give you this skid-defying, quick-stopping margin of safety—because all Goodyears are built to protect our good name. Maintenance records prove that *the cheapest thing on your car is the best tires you can buy*—so buy Goodyears, the world's first-choice for 22 consecutive years.

MORE PEOPLE RIDE ON GOODYEAR TIRES THAN ON ANY OTHER KIND

THE GREATEST NAME IN RUBBER

GOODYEAR

PRODUCED 2008 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Continued from front adv't. section, p. vi)

POETRY

★★ BIOGRAPHY FOR TRAMAN, by Winfield Townley Scott. $2.00. *Covici-Friede.* Excellent as writing, but bewildering in its echoes; the tone, as well as the technique, is alternately that of Aiken, Eliot, Putnam, and Robinson, sometimes a confusion of them all. Under the shifting diction a personality begins to struggle; it will be interesting to watch it — if it emerges.

★ THE TIME OF YEATS, by Cornelius Weygandt. $2.75. *Appleton-Century.* A résumé of recent English poetry from Henley and Stevenson to Auden and Spender. Mr. Weygandt writes with assurance rather than with authority; his conclusions are dubious, and the chapters, instead of building or progressing, merely slouch along.

★ ENCOUNTER IN APRIL, by May Sarton. $2.50. *Houghton Mifflin.* Miss Sarton has some skill with her varying verse-forms, but her sonnets are like all the tailor-made, semi-Elizabethan sonnets ever manufactured, and the book itself communicates emotion without distinction, intellect without individuality.

★ THE EMPEROR HEART, by Lawrence Whistler. $1.50. *Macmillan.* Mr. Whistler's *Four Walls*, which won the King's Gold Medal in 1935, was a showy pastiche of modern clichés; this book is a collection of more traditional poetic platitudes. The best pages are those decorated by the poet's brother, Rex Whistler.

★ MONTICELLO, by Lawrence Lee. $2.00. *Scribner.* Pretty, precise, and colorless; a poor exhibit by one who can do (and should know) better.

★ ANNIVERSARY AND OTHER POEMS, by Harriet Maxon Thayer. $2.00. *Ralph Seymour.* Unpretentious, but not without personality. The "Marginals" and "Notes" are more impressive than the more important-looking sections.

FOR FLORIDA, by Patti Broadhurst. $1.50. *Dial Press.* Free verse, commonplace in thought, careless in construction.

VIOLET RAYS, by Olive Allen Robertson. $1.50. *Poet's Press.* Dedicated to "Life and Living that Uplifts, Inspires, and Is Eternal", and printed throughout in pretty purple ink. Too bad to be true.

MISCELLANEOUS

★★★★ THE EDUCATION OF HYMAN KAPLAN, by Leonard Q. Ross. $2.00. *Harcourt, Brace.* Hyman Kaplan, an eager student in a night preparatory school for adults, is a nonconformist when it comes to learning the English language. There is a laugh on every page of this original and delightful book.

★★★ ENJOYMENT OF LAUGHTER, by Max Eastman. $3.75. *Simon & Schuster.* If you like to have jokes explained, you will enjoy this book. If you don't, you won't. Mr. Eastman's introduction is brilliant, and his examples of humor are extremely well chosen.

★★ PRIMITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND ENVIRONMENT, by S. D. Porteus. $3.00. *Macmillan.* Scholarly contribution to the prolonged argument as to the relative influences upon the human race of heredity and environment. Doctor Porteus, already noted for field work among the Bushmen of Australia, here extends his researches to the aborigines of the forbidding Kalahari Desert of the Sub-Continent, and to the primitives of Ngamiland in Africa, establishing trends which are pertinent to the study, also, of Southern sharecroppers and American slum-dwellers. Incidentally, it is splendid travel-writing, with a rare and grand feel for country and wild game. His Africa is more convincing than Mr. Ernest Hemingway's.

(Continued on page xii)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

500,000,000 people each paid him 8 cents a year for 50 years!

Chinese coolies — shirt-sleeved Americans — swarthy Latin peons — more than a quarter of the world's population helped build the fabulous Rockefeller fortune! From penniless clerk to the wealthiest and most hated man in America — then back to plain "Neighbor John," the world's most prolific giver — the almost fantastic story of the most colorful figure of American history's most incredible era. 42 illustrations. At your bookstore, $1.50.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

By B. F. Winkelman

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA

A LEADING NATIONAL *Best Seller* FOR OVER A YEAR!

An AMERICAN DOCTOR'S ODYSSEY

By VICTOR HEISER, M. D.

Why such steady popularity? Because "no contemporary volume combines the glamour, shrewd wisdom, fact, fun and inspiration that are packed into this unassuming record of a doctor's life"— *N. Y. Herald Tribune* More than 220,000 sold. $3.50

W · W · NORTON & CO., 70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

A brilliant new novel by

G. B. Stern

OLEANDER RIVER

With her expert skill, the author of "Monogram," "The Matriarch," etc. blends wit and humor, irony and tenderness in this romantic story, which grows steadily more dramatic until the disclosure at the end. $2.50

What will happen?

IF WAR COMES

By R. Ernest Dupuy *and* George F. Eliot

Two military experts here tell how the next great war will be fought — if it comes, and show the moves that various nations may make and what these moves involve. $3.00

The Macmillan Company

60 Fifth Ave. New York

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN *(Russia's Goldbrick Constitution)*, chief Far Eastern correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* in Tokyo, was formerly Moscow correspondent for the same paper. He has published four books on Russia, and a current work, *Collectivism: A False Utopia (Macmillan)*. **RALPH COGHLAN** *(Missouri Uplift: A Case History)* is a member of the editorial staff of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. **LAWRENCE DENNIS** *(Liberalism Commits Suicide)*, ex-soldier and diplomat, now writes and lectures in this country. His latest book is *The Coming American Fascism (Harpers)*. **JOHN FANTE** *(The Road to Hell)* lives in California and writes movie scenarios and short stories. **EILEEN HALL** *(Autumnal)* lives in New York City and contributes verse to various magazines. **SISTER M. MADELEVA** *(October Birthday)* is president of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Illinois. She is the author of several volumes of essays and poems. **JACKSON MATHEWS** *(Deeper Than Atlanta)*, born and raised in Georgia, now is a member of the faculty of Washington State Normal School. **JOHN RUSSELL McCARTHY** *(Matilda's Glasses)* has resided in California since 1920. He has published three books of verse. **CHANNING POLLOCK** *("The Workers" vs. The Workers)*, well-known writer and lecturer, is a frequent contributor to these pages. **FLETCHER PRATT** *(The Disarmament Hoax)* has been a librarian, reporter, and special feature writer. His newest book is *Hail, Caesar! (Random House)*. **CHARLES B. ROTH** *(The Myth of the Two-Gun Man)*, a Denver advertising man, has for twenty years made a hobby of collecting and disproving Frontier shooting yarns. **AUGUST A. THOMEN** *(Fallacies About Your Health)* is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, and the author of *Don't Believe It! Says the Doctor (Vail-Ballou Press)*.

You will *LIKE* these popular

American Ships

(and the outstanding VALUES they offer)

***direct to* ALL EUROPE**

(Ireland, England, France, Germany)

on America's largest, fastest liners

s. s. MANHATTAN

s. s. WASHINGTON

Cabin Class, $181 up—Tourist Class, $122 up

Or on the more informal s.s. President Roosevelt and s. s. President Harding, Cabin Class, $136 up. Also "American One Class" liners every Friday direct to London—fortnightly to Cobh and Liverpool—for only $105, one way; $199.50, round trip.

***to* CALIFORNIA *and* Mexico**

via Havana, Panama Canal and Acapulco

s. s. California

s. s. Pennsylvania

s. s. Virginia

These famous "Big 3" liners—largest and most popular in Coast-to-Coast service—are operated by the Panama Pacific Line, an associated service.

Only $225 up, 1st Class to California—$195 up to Mexico. Tourist from $125 and $105 respectively. Also rail-water "Cruise-Tours", with combination rates from home town back to home town.

See your local TRAVEL AGENT for complete details.

United States Lines

ONE BROADWAY, NEW YORK

Offices in principal cities

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The LITERARY BAZAAR

FIRST EDITIONS :: RARE BOOKS
AUTOGRAPHS :: LITERARY SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

MATHILDE WEIL, LITERARY AGENT. Books, short stories, articles and verse criticized and marketed. Play and scenario departments. THE WRITERS' WORKSHOP, INC., General Electric Building, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York.

LAURENCE ROBERTS, LITERARY AGENT. Editorially recognized, professional aid in placement of Stories, Novels, Books, fiction, non-fiction. Intelligent, personal assistance in revision, criticism, editing. New authors invited. Information on request. 49 West 42nd Street, New York City.

WANTED Authors' Manuscripts for immediate marketing. Free examination. Send manuscripts to REVEL SYNDICATE, 41 W. 45 St., N. Y. C.

GENERAL

CONTACTS, the Clearing House for the mentally isolated, connects you with 2000 members the world over. Now in its 10th year. Unusual books loaned free. Send 3c stamp. CONTACTS, Box 91, Station D, New York City.

ATHEIST BOOKS. 32-page catalogue free.
Truth Seeker Co., 38 Park Row, New York, N. Y.

OUT-OF-PRINT

WE SPECIALIZE and are successful in finding, promptly the "Out-of-Print" or "Hard-to-Find" books which you particularly desire. Please write us stating "Wants." No obligation. THE SEVEN BOOK-HUNTERS, Station O, Box 22, N. Y. C.

THE OUT-OF-PRINT BOOK YOU WANT may be in stock; or can be obtained easily. Please advise us as to your special interests and requirements. Good books bought in any quantity. CARLTON L. PYETELL, 860 West 181 St., New York City.

THE BOOKS YOU WANT AND CAN'T FIND — scarce, unusual, and out-of-print titles on all subjects may now be quickly located through our FREE Search Service. Send list of your Wants — no obligation. BOOK RESEARCH BUREAU, 121 East 23rd St., New York City.

RATES

THE LITERARY BAZAAR is the meeting place for those interested in autographs, first editions, rare books, stamps, prints, coins and manuscript agents. The rates are reasonable — a half inch advertisement (about forty words) now costs only $5.00 — and on a twelve time order, $4.00. Write Dept. LB-10, THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York City.

In New York

People
who want comfort,
convenience, service
and the finest wines,
food and liquors
to be had

Stop
at the
MADISON
15 East 58th Street

DIGITIZED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

!o other book club gives you as much as the
OOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA

A Great World-Famous Classic

CLASSICS WORTH $12.00—YOURS FREE

the maze of famous books how is one to know where to begin read-
? But what is easier than to read the famous classic selected for you
h month by the skilled Editors of the Book League? And what is
r than to see your shelves of these renowned classics — all uni-
mly bound in attractive blue cloth, stamped in gold like a luxurious
t" of books — expand so rapidly and WITHOUT ANY COST
YOU! Remember, these 12 classics are worth $12 or MORE.

An Outstanding Newly-Published Book

ere is an extravagant way to buy nearly every-
ng — including books — and there is a SEN-
BLE, ECONOMICAL way. If you have been
ying books on the "hit-and-miss" plan and
ying the regular high retail prices of $2.50 to
00 or more, why not try this new way that saves
nearly 60%? Remember, in the Book League
you never pay more than $1.39 for any book, and
world-famous classic comes along with it FREE

Note these exclusive BOOK LEAGUE FEATURES

You get the ONLY Balanced Reading Program offered
any book club. 12 outstanding newly published books
h year by authors in the front rank. 12 living classics
the geniuses of all time, such as Anatole France, Vol-
e, Flaubert, Turgenev, Daudet and Ibsen. The best of
NEW and the best of the OLD!

You make tremendous savings — a $2.50 to $4.00 book
h month for only $1.39 and a classic each month FREE
two books worth up to $5.00 for only $1.39. You save
50 to $3.50 each month. Think what you can do with a
ing of $2.50 to $3.50 on books each month!

You don't have to be a member for six months or more
get a free bonus book, and then get only one or two a
year. You get TWELVE free bonus books each year, and
they come one each month, beginning as soon as you join
the Book League.

4. Your library of good books grows FASTER and MORE
ECONOMICALLY than by any other plan. At the end
of 12 months you will have 24 handsome, full library-
volumes worth at least $45 for which you will have paid
only $16.68 — and never miss the money at the rate o
only $1.39 a month!

5. Because you get the best of the new authors and th
best of the old, your literary pleasure and knowled
progresses steadily in a thorough, well-rounded way with
out conscious effort.

SCRIBE NOW

d No Money

t Mail Card

HE BOOK
EAGUE OF
ERICA, Inc.

ept. 10 AM
West 48th St.
ew York, N. Y.

E OTHER SIDE
OR OFFER)

2 GREAT BOOKS *a Month for only* $1.39 MA
NO

THE BOOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.
Dept. 10 AM, 15 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.

Please reserve in my name the 12 FREE CLASSICS (full library size) which are to b
sent to me (one each month) with each new selection of The Book League of America –
if I decide to join the League after examining the first two books. Also please send me th
two current books — the NEW book and the classic. If I return them within 5 days yo
will cancel my membership, and I will owe nothing. Otherwise I will send $1.39 (plu
postage) for the new book and each of the forthcoming new selections for a year. Th
Classic comes to me each month *free*.

Name.....

Street and No.....

City.....State.....

☐ Check here if you wish to send a year's dues, $16.08, with this card. In this case we wil
pay the postage, saving you about $1.50. Same refund-protection privilege applies.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED